DIRECTIONS FOR A GODLY LIFE:

Especially for Communicating at the LORDS TABLE.

Intended first for private use; now published for the good of those who desire the safety of their own Souls, and shall be pleased to make use hereof.

By *HENRY TOZER*,
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The Tenth Edition.

PSAL. 69. 33.
Seek ye after God, and your souls shall live.

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TO THE HONOURABLE GENTLEMAN Mr. *LORENZO CARY*,

Son to the R. Honourable Vicount *FAULKLAND* Lord Deputy of *Ireland*.

Worthy Sir,

SInce the time that it first pleased Your Honourable Father to commend you unto the Religious government of this Colledge wherein you now live, your carriage hath been so sweet and lovely, that it hath won, I

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dare say, the heart of each member thereof to a readiness of respecting this your goodness, as in word so in deed, according to their several places and dignities. Neither could I suffer my self, standing in a more near relation than any of the rest unto you, to come short in the performance of this office; Wherefore I here offer unto your religious meditation this ensuing Treatise, collected and composed first for private use, but now published, not to gain the applause of any (from which my own unworthiness sufficiently checks me) but chiefly for these two respects: first to testifie that love, which I both owe unto you, and am ready to make good. Secondly,

ly, and more principally, to invite you to a due consideration of those holy duties therein contained, that by a seasonable knowledge of the same, your actions may be the more carefully ordered, and Gods name in the faithful practice thereof more fully glorified. The subject is a matter not of humane learning, but of Gods service, and therefore a part without exception, the greatest; the due receiving of the holy Communion. A duty, I confess, better known, than well considered; more often thought on, than sincerely practiced: if it were not so, bad actions would not be so commonly priviledged by the Greatness of the Agents, as now they are; but they to whom

God hath given most honour here, would ever think it their greatest glory to honour him most again by their faithful service unto him. And good reason why they should, if they remember that to whom God hath given most, of them he requireth most again; yea such who have the precedency of others in place and dignity, may do well to consider, that, in making a conscience of matters of Religion, and leading their lives according to the Rules thereof, they do not only provide well for the salvation of their own souls, but give a good occasion to others also, while they happily provoke them to the practice of the same duties by their good examples: which

which are ever held as lively precepts, and ſerve for a ſecret reproof to an ingenious inferiour, when he ſhall ſee himſelf defective in that, wherein his betters have gon before him. Let the Honourable and Mighty thus remember how far they ſhall honour God by a religious life, and then they cannot but acknowledge that it is their glorious freedom to be his humble Servants. Others, if they pleaſe, may take notice of this perſwaſion; and perhaps they would, if I were not unworthy to adviſe them: but now I ſpeak to you alone, whom I well know willing, as freely to make uſe of others help, ſo truly to accept of this from me. Your own happineſs you muſt confeſs, with

with thanks to God, that by his providence you live in that Society, whose Religion is as firm as undefiled, where you cannot say, you want the rule either of loving precepts or example, according unto which you have already joyned with the rest in a religious communicating at the Lords Table. My desire is to perswade you to a constant perseverance in what you have so well begun; that so devoting your tender years with those that follow to the service of the Almighty, you may again from him receive, and fully enjoy, his daily blessings, which doth ever attend on those that truly seek him. Some Meditation, which perhaps may serve for your directions, I here

preſent unto your view, in which I freely acknowledge almoſt nothing mine (to prevent the cenſure of curious Readers) but only the labour of compoſing: this I now commend to you, and you unto the bleſſed providence of the moſt Higheſt, reſting ever

Yours truly

in the Lord,

HENRY TOZER.

DIRECTIONS
For
The due Receiving of the Holy Communion.

CHAP. I.

What a Sacrament is, and how many there be.

A Sacrament is an outward visible sign of an inward and invisible grace ordained by God, whereby he doth seal unto us his covenant

venant of Grace made in the blood of Christ, and we again testifie our faith and piety towards him: so that it is both a sign in respect of the thing signified, and a seal, in respect of the Covenant sealed unto us. The word Sacrament * doth properly signifie an Oath, whereby Souldiers bound themselves unto their General: whence it is taken to signifie that Obligation, whereby we tye our selves to the blessed and sweet service of Jesus Christ: for hereby we, as Christs Souldiers, × first bind our selves by promise of obedience to fight under the Lords Banner, against the world, the flesh and the Devil: × Secondly, we put on

on the cogniſance and Arms, the colours and marks of Chriſt, by profeſſing our Faith in him, that ſo it may appear unto the World to whom we do belong.

Now Sacraments are of two ſorts.

Firſt, Of the Old Teſtament, which were two.

Firſt, Circumciſion.

Secondly; The Paſſover.

The firſt was ordained for a ſign of entrance into the Covenant.

The ſecond for an aſſurance of confirmation of, and continuance in the ſame: both which are now aboliſhed, and in ſtead of them, we now have the Sacraments of the New Teſtament, which are like-

likewise two.

First, Baptism answerable to Circumcision.

Secondly, The Lords Supper to the Passover: both signified by that water and blood, which issued out of the side of Christ, when it was pierced by the Souldiers on the Cross. Of these the first is called the Sacrament of our Nativity or entrance, because by it we are assured that we are received into the Covenant of Grace, and so are regenerate and belong to the flock of Christ. The second is called the Sacrament of our growth and perseverance, whereby we grow up in Christ, and are assured that we shall be still kept in this

estate;

eſtate. So that both are neceſſary: the one to aſſure us of our entrance into, and the other of our continuance in, the eſtate of Grace: for although that Grace once conferr'd cannot be loſt, yet our aſſurance doth often want ſtrengthening, by reaſon of our manifold temptations, againſt which we are comforted by the remembrance of Chriſts death and paſſion: which doth alſo teach us why the Sacrament of Baptiſm is received but once, and the Lords Supper often, becauſe our birth is ſignified by our Baptiſm, and we can be born but once, but we daily ſtand in need of food and ſtrengthning, and there-

fore

fore we often receive the Supper of the Lord, that our souls may be nourished unto life everlasting.

Chap. II.

What the Lords Supper is.

That we may rightly understand the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, we must know two things.

1. What it is.
2. What belongs to the due receiving of it.

For the first: The Lords Supper is a Sacrament, consisting of Bread and Wine lawfully consecrated, and distribued;

ſtributed: inſtituted by Chriſt himſelf for a continual remembrance of the Death and Paſſion of Chriſt, and the benefits which we receive thereby.

This inſtitution was at Chriſts laſt Supper after he had eaten the Paſſover with his Diſciples, ſo that it is called a Supper in reſpect of the time of the inſtitution; and the Lords Supper in reſpect of the Author, the Lord Chriſt: as alſo in reſpect of the end thereof, which is partly to ſet forth the Lords Death, and the Spiritual food therein received, namely the Body and Blood of Chriſt himſelf.

In this Sacrament we muſt conſider

consider two things.

1. The parts.
2. The end.

The parts are two,

First, The outward signs.

Secondly, The thing signified.

The signs are either representing, namely, the Elements themselves: or applying signs, which are the actions about those Elements.

The Elements are two, Bread and Wine: not Bread only, but both, according to Christs institution: and that asunder, not the Bread dipt in the Wine, as some will have it, because Christs blood was shed out of his body for our sins, and we are to receive these Signs as representing

ſenting Chriſt, not whole, but wounded and pierced.

Now Chriſt choſe theſe Elements before any other, becauſe they beſt ſerve to ſet forth Chriſts Body and Blood; for as Bread by diverſe breakings and preſſings comes to be perfect, yea the chiefeſt food of our bodies, ſtill giving a good reliſh, when other things do not, and is alſo more common to all, than any other: So the Body of Chriſt by many torments was made the chief nouriſhment of our ſouls, remaining always moſt ſweet and pleaſant, and common to all that can receive him by Faith: and as Wine doth cheriſh and comfort us, ſatisfie our thirſt,

purge

purge away many corrupt humours, and maketh us bold and adventrous: so the blood of Christ revives and glads our drooping souls, satisfieth our spiritual thirst, purgeth us from all our sins, and makes us couragious against all fear of our enemy the Devil. Again, as Bread is made of many grains into one loaf, and Wine of many grapes into one cup: so we partaking thereof, and of Christ, by Faith are made one with him as our head, and also one among our selves as members of his body. Thus of the Elements.

The actions in this Sacrament are of two sorts.

1. Of the Minister.

2. Of

2. Of the Communicants.

The actions of the Minister are these.

1. Setting apart.

2. Blessing of the Elements, whereby is signified, that Christ Jesus was set apart and sanctified for us, as it is *John* 17. 19.

3. Breaking and powring out. And

4. Distributing to the Communicants; whereby is signified that Christs Body was crucified, and his Blood shed, and that the benefits thereof are offered unto us, if we have Faith to receive them, as it is *John* 3. 15. *He was lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should have life everlasting.*

The

The Actions of the Communicants are two.

1. Taking.
2. Eating and drinking.

By which is signified that they, which receive benefit by Christ, must receive him by Faith, applying his merits to their own souls, as *John* 1. 12. *As many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them which believe on his name.*

Thus of the signs: the thing signified is the Body and Blood of Christ, with the benefits, which we receive thereby, namely the strengthning and refreshing of our souls in the remission of our sins: and this we receive, not of the Minister (for he gives

gives only the signs) but of God himself, apprehending the same by our Faith: for Christ is not signifi'd in these signs as in a picture, but exhibited unto us, being himself present in the Sacrament, though not corporally to the Bread and Wine, yet spiritually to our Faith; for though *his Body be in Heaven, and must there remain until the last day*, as it is Acts 3. 21. yet we may feed on him spiritually by Faith, by applying his death and passion unto our sinful souls: so that there is one union between Christ and the Elements, which is Symbolical: and another between Christ and us, which is spiritual and real.

The

The ends of this Sacrament are twofold.

1. In respect of others.

2. In respect of our selves.

In respect of others, to testifie unto them that Faith which we profess, that so they seeing our readiness herein, may have their hearts also stirred up to such good duties.

In respect of our selves, it concerns either what we have received from, or what we are to return to God. In the first respect it serveth.

First for remembrance: Namely, of the death of Christ; for, *as often as we receive this, we shew the Lords death*

death till he come, 1 Cor. 11. 26.

Secondly, for confirmation unto us; and that, both of our union amongst our selves; as 1 Cor. 10. 17. *For we being many are one bread and one body, for we all partake of one bread*: as also of our Communion with Christ; for as the Bread and Wine are turned into the substance of our bodies, so we by faith are united unto Christ, and made flesh of his flesh; for *his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed*, Joh. 9. 55. and for this cause it is called the Communion.

In the second respect concerning that which we are to return unto God, it serves

to teſtifie our thankfulneſs to God for his mercy in giving us his Son, and in him all things, and aſſuring us thereof, by this Seal: which we cannot but do, when we conſider the torments that he endured for our ſinnes, which were indeed the very nailes and ſpear that pierced him: and for this cauſe it is called the Euchariſt, becauſe in it we offer up our thanks unto God; and ſo alſo it may be called a Sacrifice, not that we do herein offer up Chriſt unto God, (for Chriſt himſelf at once finiſhed this offering of his Body on the Croſs) but becauſe we offer up our thankful hearts unto God for his

mercy

mercy in Christ, so that it is a sacrifice, not of Christ but of our thankfulness.

Chap. III.

The necessity of receiving the Lords Supper.

That we may receive this Sacrament as we ought, we must consider two things, 1. the necessity; 2. the right manner of receiving the same.

As for the first, we must know that it is not a thing indifferent for us to receive, or not to receive at our pleasure, but that we ought to do it (though not every Sabbath after the custome observed in the Primitive

Church, yet without fail, as often as occasion is offered, according to the example of those in the *Acts, who continued stedfast in breaking of bread*, Acts 2. 42.

The necessity of which duty will further appear, if we consider these two things. 1. The principal cause, which often keeps us from it. 2. The motives, which may draw us unto it.

First, that which makes us backward in the performance of it, is questionless the policy of our Arch-enemy, the Devil, who strives by all means to draw us away, either by a careless neglect of our chiefest good, to feed rather on our own

foolish

foolish imaginations (as he did them in the Gospel, who had rather *see their grounds, or prove their Oxen, then taste of that Supper* to which they were invited, Luke 14. 18, 19.) or else by a timorous fearfulness of our own unworthiness to approach unto so holy a banquet, as this is. And truly if we could but see that this is his doing, we would by all meanes strive against his temptations; for, who amongst us would not endeavour to the utmost, so far to resist his temporal enemy, as that he should not be able to hurt him either in body or in goods? and shall we be more careful for the preservation

of earthly bodies, that of our heavenly ſouls, which Chriſt Jeſus hath redeemed by his precious blood? God forbid; we muſt know that GOD expects more at our hands, and that our ſouls are never ſo ſafe, as when they are in greateſt oppoſition, and do that which is moſt diſpleaſing unto our chiefeſt enemy, the Devil: for the more we pleaſe him, the leſs we pleaſe God, and the nearer we are to him, the farther we are from God.

The motives which may draw us to the performance of this duty, are taken from a due conſideration of theſe two things. 1. Who it is which inviteth us unto it. 2. What

2. What be the conſequents of receiving or not receiving.

He which inviteth us, is God himſelf, whoſe Ordinance it is; and who requires it at our hands as a principal part of his ſervice: and therefore as often as we omit it, we may be ſure that we offend him; which he himſelf teſtified in threatning to *cut off that ſoul from his people, which ſhould forbear to keep the Paſſover*, Num. 9. 13. and if ſo, then doubtleſs the neglect of this Sacrament, wherein Chriſt is ſo fully exhibited unto us, is very diſpleaſing unto him; which is alſo expreſt in the parable of the great Supper, *Luke* 14. 24. *None of theſe men which were*

bidden, shall taste of my Supper: Why? because they came not when they were invited; and if we refuse to come when the Lord calls, who knows whether he will give us life until the next invitation? let us therefore take the Lords offer, while it is to day, lest we be cut off before the morrow.

The next motive is taken from the consequents, and that 1. of not receiving. If we receive not, we offer a twofold injury; the one to Christ, the other to our selves.

To Christ two ways. 1. In contemning his Ordinance, who commanded his Disciples to receive it, 1 *Cor.* 11. 24.

24. and in them us. 2. In neglecting his love towards us; who (as a Father on his death-bed) in the night that he was betrayed, bequeathed this seal and pledge of his love unto us, which therefore ought to be right dear unto us, and at no time neglected when it is offered.

Again, If we receive not, we injure our selves, and that also two ways. 1. In respect of our name and profession; for if we come not when others do, we expose our selves to the censure of them, shewing that we are at least neglecters, if not contemners of GOD's Ordinance, *who will have all to come to it*, Mat. 26. 27. yea that we have not the

life of a Christian in us: for *whosoever eateth not the flesh of the Son of man, and drinketh not his blood, hath no life in him.* Jo. 6. 53. 2. We injure our selves from the benefits thereof, for the remembrance of Christs death and passion (if duly considered) cannot but be a great comfort unto us, which we put from us, as often as we omit the Lords Supper: and thus much we may assure our selves, that the Devil will be ready to take the least occasion to suggest other meditations unto us: and what a miserable thing is it for us to be exercised in our own pleasures, or such like, when others, with whom we are bound to be present

are

are reverently gathered together, to the comfort of their own ſouls, to feed at the Lords Table? If we ſay that we are then exerciſed in other good duties, as reading the Word of God, or ſuch like, we muſt know that ſuch duties, (good in themſelves) are not acceptable to God at ſuch times: and who knows, ſeeing that herein we neglect the Lords Ordinance, how far he will give the Devil leave to tempt us, and draw us away, even from thoſe duties alſo, to wicked imaginations.

2. The Conſequents of receiving cannot but invite us to a conſtant performance of this duty. Now theſe conſequents

ſequents reſpects either God, or our ſelves. That which reſpects God, is our duty of thankfulneſs and praiſe, which herein we offer unto him for his mercy: which is very pleaſant unto him, and neceſſary to be performed of us: becauſe *he is gracious, and his mercy endureth for ever towards them that fear him*: and how then can we but with *David, have our hearts ready to ſing and praiſe him with the beſt member that we have*, Pſal. 108. 1.

That which reſpects our ſelves, is the benefit which we receive thereby: which is twofold. 1. General. 2. more ſpecial. The General benefits, which we receive by

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the Lords Supper, are chiefly two.

1. A ſupply of all our wants, which we ſhall be ſure to have if we receive aright: for he, *which eateth the fleſh of Chriſt, ſhall never hunger, and he which drinketh his blood, ſhall never thirſt*, as Chriſt himſelf hath promiſed: neither need we doubt of the truth hereof: for, *he is full of grace and truth*, Joh. 1.14. *and in him dwelleth all fulneſs*, Col. 1.19. and how then can we want any thing, if we poſſeſs him that hath all things?

2. An excellent rule to our whole life: for when we hereby conſider Gods great love unto us, we cannot (if there be any love or fear of God

God in us) but be carful to avoid any thing, which may be diſpleaſing unto him: ſo that hereby our bodies are made more obedient unto our ſouls, and our ſouls unto God.

The ſpecial benefits which we receive by the Lords Supper, is in regard of our faith: and this again reſpects either our ſelves and others, or elſe our ſelves alone.

The firſt is, a teſtifying of our faith unto others: for hereby we both ſhew unto others the faith which we profeſs, and alſo by our example ſtir them up to the performance of the ſame duty: in this reſpect therefore it is neceſſary we ſhould often receive.

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In the ſecond reſpect it is a confirmation and increaſe of that faith, which we have in us: wherein we are to endeavour by all meanes to continue, as St. *Paul* taught the Diſciples, *Acts* 14. 22. and beware that we fall not from our ſtedfaſtneſs, *but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*: as it is 2 *Pet.* 3. 18. whereof we cannot but be careful, if we conſider our weakneſs; for we are ever ſubject to Apoſtaſie, and our faith is exceeding weak; as we may plainly ſee by our coldneſs in prayer and other good duties, by our fear of death, and by our love of this world: for the ſtrengthning

ning of which, Christ hath left unto us this Sacrament, as a special means conducing thereunto: for the Covenant which our Faith taketh hold of, as it is contained in the word of GOD, so it is sealed unto us by this Sacrament: and therefore Christ calls the Cup, *the Cup of the New Testament*, because it seals unto us the Covenant of GOD in the New Testament, accomplished in the shedding of Christs blood. Now if a King should in pitty and compassion send a pardon under his Seal unto a poor distressed prisoner; would we not judge that prisoner unworthy of the benefit thereof, if he should either wil-

wilfully refuſe it, or careleſly neglect it? Queſtionleſs we would: yet ſuch is our care before God, who, as King of Kings, hath ſealed unto us by this Sacrament a full remiſſion of all our ſins: If we therefore ſhall either wilfully contemn, or at our pleaſure receive this pledge of his love, what can we expect at Gods hands, but a juſt removal of this his favour from us? Surely if we joyn the conſideration of our own weakneſs, which ſo much needeth help, with the meditation of Gods mercy, who ſo freely giveth it, we cannot but acknowledge our own miſery, if we neglect it: wherefore as we fear him,

and

and tender the good of our own ſouls, let us be careful in the due performance of this ſo weighty a buſineſs. But ſome are wont to frame theſe excuſes for their abſence.

1. The often receiving of this Sacrament may breed a diſeſteem thereof; and therefore it is ſafer ſometimes to abſtain. To which I anſwer, that in matters temporal (as pleaſures, and ſuch like) the often uſe may breed contempt, or at leaſt neglect, as it often doth, but in ſpiritual things it rather breeds a greater deſire, becauſe the more we feel and know the goodneſs of them, the more we ſeek after them; yet if it

ſo

ſo come to paſs, that by often receiving, we begin to undervalue the worth of it; we muſt conſider, that this neglect ariſeth not from the often uſe of the thing, but from our corrupt nature; for this exerciſe is Gods own Ordinance; alwaies attended with his bleſſing, if rightly received; appointed as a meanes to ſtir up, and increaſe our zeal and devotion, and therefore it is not likely that it ſhould hinder it. Let not this therefore keep us from the Lords Table, but let us rather come, that it may be a means to encreaſe our piety.

2. Some will ſay; I am not

not prepared, and therefore dare not come: but this indeed is no excuse; for we must know that we ought to be alwaies prepared, our whole life should be a continual preparation, as to all other good duties, so especially to this; being *ever ready when the Lord shall call*, as our Saviour admonisheth us, *Mat.* 24. 44.

3. Others will urge, I am to take a journy, or to be imployed in such or such a business, and therefore I cannot come: Well, if this journey or the like, must of necessity be performed, thy excuse is the safer; but if it may be any way avoided (as oftentimes it may) assure thy

self

ſelf, this is to prefer thy own pleaſure before that which God commands: a day will certainly come, wherein we muſt give an account for the neglect of the leaſt of Gods Ordinances: and then it will be ſaid of ſuch pretences, *Who required theſe things at thy hands?*

4. Some are wont to urge; I am not in charity by reaſon of ſome wrong which hath been offered to me, and therefore I ought not to come. This indeed is an excuſe too common: but we muſt know, that if we be not in Charity, it is our own fault; for we ought to be in Charity, and ſtill to preſerve it: and certainly a miſera-

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ble thing it is, that we ſhould *prefer to feed on our own malice, rather then to eat of the Lords Supper*; this is to hurt our ſelves more than we need, even to wrong our ſelves becauſe others have wronged us; we ſhould rather ſeek all means of reconciliation, that ſo we may remove thoſe impediments of Piety and Religion, and come the more freely to the Lords Table.

5. Some thus plead for their abſence; I am afraid to approach unto the Lords Table by reaſon of mine infirmities which are in me, and therefore I had rather ſometimes to refrain, leſt I come unworthily, which is a very fear-

fearful thing. It is ſo indeed, but we muſt conſider, that our ſtaying away is no comfort unto us in this caſe, but rather a means to make us worſe, and to pull down Gods Judgments upon us: we ſhould rather remember the goodneſs of God, that inviteth us, promiſing to *refreſh all thoſe that are heavy loaden with their ſins*, Matth. 11. 28. not putting us off for our infirmities: for *if there be a willing mind, he accepteth us according to that which we have, and not according to that which we have not*, 1 Cor. 8. 12. though we want that perfection which others have; yet, if we have a true deſire to be refreſhed by the me-

rits

rits of Christ, and have a sincere heart before God, he will accept us according to this. Whensoever therefore the Devil shall tempt thee to draw thee away by the consideration of thy own infirmity, cheer up thy self with the comfort of the blind man in the Gospel, Mark 10. 46. *Be of good comfort, behold he calleth thee*: say unto thy self, Christ Jesus hath invited me, and hath promised to accept me, if my heart be sincere, humble, and willing: why then should the consideration of my infirmities keep me from it?

6. Others thus reply: I desire to receive, but I am conscious unto my self of some

ſome crying ſinnes which I have committed before God, for which I have not yet ſufficiently repented: and how then can I partake of this holy Banquet in the preſence of GOD? Is it ſo? art thou poor, and yet wilt thou refuſe Gold when it is offered unto thee? who will then pity thee for thy poverty? art thou deſperately ſick, and wilt thou not ſeek unto the Phyſitian for means of recovery? who will then bemoan thee for thy diſeaſe? Behold, Chriſt Jeſus is the Phyſitian of thy ſoul, as well able to heal it of all its diſeaſes, as he did the bodies of thoſe, which came unto him, of their infirmi-

ties: forſake not then this heavenly Phyſitian, but labour by a ſerious repentance to diſcharge thy conſcience of thoſe thy ſins, and then come ſpeedily unto him: it is the counſel of the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 11. who biddeth us to *examine, and then eat,* not go away: firſt *examine, then eat of this Bread and drink of this Cup.* If thou ſay, I had rather ſtay till the next opportunity, that I may have the more time to repent; conſider, that the longer thou ſtayeſt, the more ſins thou wilt run into, and then it will be ſo much the harder to repent as thou oughteſt: and beſides that, how doſt thou know whether God will give thee

grace

grace and time to repent then or not? he hath promiſed indeed to have mercy upon a ſinner, at what time ſoever he ſhall repent; but he hath not promiſed to give him grace to repent when he will: Seek the Lord therefore while he offereth himſelf unto thee, that thou maiſt find mercy when thou ſeekeſt it.

Laſtly, ſome in a proud manner thus excuſe, (or rather juſtifie their abſence.) I do already ſufficiently believe whatſoever is propoſed in the Word of God; and therefore what need have I to receive this Sacrament ſo often, as a ſeal to confirm my faith? it doth no way confer grace unto me; and

my faith is so firm, that I perswade my self I need not a seal to strengthen it so much as others do, whose faith is weaker, wherefore I think that I may sometimes forbear. But know, O vain man which thus disputest with thy God, that this is Gods Ordinance, a principal part of his service, which therefore ought diligently to be performed, though it did no way profit us, even because God had commanded it: yea, when we have done all those things which are commanded us. we must say that *we are unprofitable servants, we have done but that which was our duty to do*, Luk. 17. 10. Besides, is thy faith

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so strong that it needs no further strengthening? doest thou not daily perceive in thee a weakness of understanding in matters of Piety and Religion, a frailty in thy memory, and a continual disorder in thy affections? if not, know thus much, that it is a misery to want, but a greater misery not to be sensible of our wants: and this also know for a certain truth, that when thou findest in thy self either none, or at leastwise a small desire of hearing Gods Word and receiving the Sacrament, know, I say, that there is surely some sin or other in thee not well repented of, which clogeth thy soul, that it can-

not delight in thoſe ſpiritual exerciſes. Let us therefore indeavour to come to the Lords Table as often as we are invited: and when we do come, let us take heed that we come not for faſhion ſake, or to pleaſe men, or in any opinion of our own merit in this action: for this is not a celebration, but a prophanation of the Lords Ordinance, becauſe herein we ſerve not God, but our ſelves, which is a fearful thing: for God is not as man, that he ſhould be deceived: neither ſeeth he as man ſeeth, for man judgeth only according to the outward appearance, but God ſearcheth the very heart and reins, and will

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one day as certainly puniſh the prophaners of his Ordinance, as the contemners thereof. Wherefore, as we ought in the firſt place to be fully perſwaded of the neceſſity; ſo ſhould we in the ſecond, by all means labour to come to the knowledge of the right manner of receiving: which is the next thing to be conſidered.

CHAP. IV.

The neceſſity of preparation.

HE which deſires to receive at the Lords Table in a right manner, muſt make conſcience of three duties,

which are necessarily to be performed.

1. A diligent preparation before.

2. A seasonable Meditation in the time of receiving.

3. A Religious Practice after the same in our life and conversation.

In the first (as before in the matter of receiving) we must take notice of two things First, The Necessity. Secondly, The right manner of Preparation.

The necessity will plainly appear, if we consider these two things. First in whose presence it is, that we are to receive. Secondly, the danger which we bring on

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our ſelves by not being prepared.

As for the firſt, we are to ſit, and feed in the preſence of the Lord himſelf. Now if any, even the beſt of us, ſhould be invited by a King to his Princely Table, he would be careful to preſent himſelf (if he reverence his preſence) in the beſt manner that he could, putting on then eſpecially (if he have any better than other) his beſt apparel, and diſpoſing all things in the moſt decent order, that ſo he might be the better accepted: if ſo, with what fear and reverence ſhould we then approach unto the Table of this King of Kings, when he inviteth us?

who ſtand there ready, attended with his Angels to behold thoſe, which preſent themſelves, and will ſoon eſpy out that man, who ſhall dare to approach before him, not having on his wedding garment: and what can ſuch exſpect, but, with the man in the Goſpel, *a caſting out into utter darkneſs?* Matth. 22. 13. Neither muſt we think to deceive the Lord with an hypocritical out-ſide, for he looketh not to the outward geſture only, but to the inward part of the ſoul: it is not ſo much a clean hand or curious attire which maketh us accepted of God, as a pure heart, and a cleanſed ſoul, adorned with faith and repentance:

tance: we may for a time deceive mortal men, such as our selves: but when the secrets of our hearts shall be made manifest, then shall our hypocrisie, as well as our negligence, be laid open to our destruction. Let us therefore humble our selves before God, and prepare our selves aright, that we may escape the danger which will otherwise fall upon us: which is the second thing to be considered in the Necessity of preparation. The danger of not being prepared is particularly set forth unto us by considering the offence which we herein commit, and the reward thereof.

If we come unprepared and

and ſo receive unworthily, our offence is no leſs then to be *guilty of the Body and Blood of Chriſt*, as St. *Paul* ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 11.27. that is, we offer ſpecial diſgrace and indignity unto Chriſt, in not receiving him with that reverence which we ought: which offence, as it is in it ſelf very hainous, ſo it draws on us a fearful puniſhment: for the Prophet *Jeremiah* hath pronounced him *accurſed that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully*, Jerem. 48. 10. and if it be ſo in other things, which are of leſs moment, what can we expect for the abuſing of this ſo weighty a matter? The Apoſtle ſetteth down at full

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the fearfulneſs hereof; when he ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 11. 29. that *he which eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh his own damnation*: than which, what can be more terrible? Neither is the Scripture ſilent in ſhewing us the Judgments of God upon ſuch offenders; as we may plainly ſee, both in the Old Teſtament, in the ſuddain death of *Uzza*, for raſh touching of the Ark: and alſo in the New, in the *binding hand and foot, for want of the wedding garment.* Wherefore let the danger hereof move us to a careful preparation, before we preſume to come unto the Lords Table. But ſome may ſay: I perſwade my

my ſelf, that I can by no means be worthy to receive this Sacrament, and how then can I receive worthily? it is true, if we truly conſider our own unworthineſs, and the excellency of this Sacrament, we cannot by any means become worthy thereof: but this muſt be our comfort, That he is truly worthy, whom God in mercy accepteth as worthy: and ſo he will us, if we come unto him in humility and reverence. Let us therefore, according to the Apoſtles rule, firſt *try and examine our ſelves, and then eat of this Supper*: which that we may the better do, we ought in the next place to take notice of the

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right manner of preparation.

Chap. V.

Concerning Examination in general.

For our better performance of the duty of preparation, we muſt be careful to ſet aſide a convenient time before the Communion: wherein, laying aſide all other impediments, we ought ſeriouſly to be exerciſed in three duties. 1 A diligent examination of our fitneſs, and worthineſs to receive. 2. A comfortable premeditation of the benefits, which we are to receive. 3. Earneſt prayer

prayer unto God for a bleſſing upon our endeavours; that ſo we may be accepted to receive thoſe benefits.

In our examination we are to conſider, 1. To whom this duty belongs: 2. How it is to be performed.

The firſt we learn from S. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 28. who biddeth *every man to try and examine himſelf*: ſo that we our ſelves are to examine our ſelves. Indeed the Miniſters of the word of God, and all ſuch, to whom God hath committed the charge and care of others, ought carefully to try and examine thoſe which belong unto them, that ſo they may be more fit: and inferiours ought alſo willingly to ſubmit themſelves

ſelves unto their tryal: yea, if it be not offered, to ſeek their help when they doubt of any thing, that ſo by their directions they may the more chearfully go on. Theſe are duties, which God requires at the hands of all, the neglect whereof will one day fall heavy upon thoſe, which ſhall fail in the due performance thereof. Yet this is not ſufficient, for we are, for the moſt part, full of hypocriſie, ready to hide our ſins from others: yea we are ſo witty in iniquity, that we can behave our ſelves ſo ſmoothly, in reſpect of the outward ſhew, that others ſhall find no fault in us at all, though notwithſtanding our conſciences do all the while

while accuſe us of ſome ſins lurking within us: wherefore we are commanded alſo to try and examine every man himſelf in particular.

This Examination muſt be twofold. Firſt, General. Secondly, Particular. In the firſt we muſt examine our ſelves in theſe two things. 1. Whether we be in the number of the faithful or not: which is very needful to be conſidered, otherwiſe we partake in vain: for as our bodies can receive no nouriſhing and ſtrengthning from the food which we daily receive, unleſs they have ſome life in them before: ſo neither can our ſouls, if they be void of the life of grace, receive

receive any comfort by this ſpiritual food in the Lords Supper, which doth continue and encreaſe life, where it finds it, but works none, where there is none before. Let us therefore in the firſt place diligently try whether Chriſt be in us or not: of which we ſhall the more fully aſſure our ſelves, if we can find this perſwaſion in us, that we (as our fore-fathers were) *are ſtrangers und pilgrims here*, Heb. 11. 13. *looking for a city* (as *Abraham* did) *which had foundations, whoſe builder and maker is God*, and that we are *made free from the bondage of ſin by the Son of God, Chriſt Jeſus*, John 8.26. and ſo with *David*, *put our*

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whole truſt and rely only on his mercy. Pſal. 52. 9. 2. We are to make tryal of our readineſs, whether we be willing and have a deſire to partake of the Lords Supper or no. A willing mind God required of thoſe, which *offered any thing for the building of the Tabernacle*: as it is, *Exod.* 25. 2. and of thoſe, *which offered any burnt-offerings*, Levit. 19. 5. If ſo in theſe, which were but ſhadows of things to come; much more doth he expect it at our hands in the performance of this duty, which is the ſubſtance it ſelf. Neither yet let us here deceive our ſelves, thinking that a bare conſent and willing mind is ſufficient; it is

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an hungry desire and appetite, as well as willingness to receive meat offered; yea that especially, which testifieth a good disposition in the Stomack: and God requireth in all his service, (therefore in this also) that *we serve him with all our heart, and with all our soul.* Deut. 10. 12. and *blessed are they, which hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled,* Matth. 5. 6. For want of this desire it is, that many, when they come to the Lords Table are never the better, because God, as he inviteth, so he feedeth none but those that *hunger and thirst*, Isaiah 55. 1. Let us therefore try and examine our selves whether

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we can say with *David*, *Psal.* 42. 1. *Like as the heart desireth the water brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God: my soul is a thirst for God, yea even for the living God: when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?* If we can find this desire in us, then happy are we: if not, let us humble our selves before God, and beseech him to work and stir up in us the good motion of his spirit, that so we may attain to some measure of this thirst, and from that go on farther to a particular examination of our fitness to receive.

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CHAP.

Chap. VI.

The examination of our Knowledge.

IN our particular Examination, (becauſe we are dull and ignorant in matters that concern our Salvation, and alſo have, and do often offend both God and our neighbours; all which are hinderances to the due performance of this duty) we muſt examine our ſelves in thoſe particulars, which concern both our information in matters which we ſhould underſtand, and our reconciliation with thoſe, whom we have offended.

That

That which concerns our information, is a good and wholesome knowledge of those things which God hath revealed unto us; which is so necessary, that it is the very ground of all our service to God: for how can we do the will of God aright, if we know it not? *Surely that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good*, saith *Solomon*, Prov. 16. 2. and therefore, *God will have all men to come to the knowledge of the truth*, 1 Tim. 26. without which, we can reap no comfort unto our selves in any thing that we do, but are as dead men: for *this* (and this only) *is life eternal, that we know God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent*, Joh.

John 17. 3. So that without it there is no life: and hence it is that the Lord himſelf complains, *Hoſea* 4. 6. *My people are periſhed for lack of knowledge*: and hence it comes to paſs, that many receive this Sacrament without any benefit unto themſelves, becauſe they are not able to diſcern of it aright. We ſhould therefore all our life long carefully exerciſe our ſelves in the Word of God, that ſo, when we ſhall come to examine our ſelves concerning our knowledge, we may the more eaſily, and with the greater comfort, try our fitneſs in this reſpect; whether we have attained to a competent meaſure of knowledge

in the grounds of Religion or not. Which that we may the better do, we are to make tryal of a twofold Knowledge, which we ought to have: The one coocerning God, the other concerning Man.

Concerning God, we are to know, That there is but one, only wise and true God, subsisting in three Persons; the Father begetting the Son; the Son begotten of the Father; and the Holy Ghost proceeding from both: which is a Mystery far exceeding our understanding: yet so far are we to know and believe it, as God hath revealed it in his word: and therefore first we are to examine our selves con-

concerning this knowledge.

Concerning man we are to know that he was first created in uprightneſs, *according to the image of God*, Gen. 1. 17. but afterwards fell through diſobedience, and was again recovered by the meritorious death of Chriſt Jeſus. This we are to examine according to the two parts of the Word of God, the Law, and the Goſpel.

In the firſt we ſhall plainly ſee what we are in our ſelves, even wretched and miſerable ſinners, corrupt children of diſobedient parents, and that we have juſtly deſerſerved death as a due reward for our manifold ſins, both original and actual, being

carnal, ſold under ſin, by nature the children of wrath, Epheſ. 2. 3.

In the ſecond, we ſhall underſtand that we are in Chriſt, and what that Covenant is, which God hath made unto man in him, for the pardoning of their ſins, which return unto him by repentance, and apply the ſame unto themſelves by Faith. So that here we are to know two things: 1. The means of our redemption and reconciliation, the Death of Chriſt: *whom God in love ſent into the world, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of ſons,* Coloſſ. 4. 5. *and ſo hath delivered us from the power of dark-*

darkneſs, Coloſſ. 1. 13.

2. The means whereby we may apply this unto our ſelves: namely Faith, which is a gift of God, begotten and increaſed by hearing the Word, and receiving the Sacrament. Let us therefore ſeriouſly examine our ſelves, whether we have learned out of the Word of God our firſt innocency, which we had by Creation; our miſery; which we fell into by Tranſgreſſion; and the happineſs, which we have obtained again by our ſweet and bleſſed Redemption: for in thoſe things ought every one to be inſtructed, which approacheth unto the Lords Table.

Beſides this Knowledge

of God and man, we are further to have a particular knowledge of the Sacrament it self: where we are to try, whether we do rightly discern the Elements from the Lords Body, and the true use of them: wherein we must consider, that the Bread and Wine (in themselves ordinary) being ordained of Christ, are now become holy, and whereas Christ blessed this Sacrament at the first institution, we are to know that it is a blessed Sacrament: because, whatsoever he blessed, is blessed, and that it will be a means of great blessing unto us, if rightly received; and whereas Christ gave the same after Supper, we must further know, that it was not ordained

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to satisfie our bodily hunger; for, if *any man* thus hunger, St. *Paul* tells him that he must *eat at home*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 34. but it was given for the refreshing of wearied Souls, by the commemoration of Christs death for us, and of our communion with him: but of this particular Knowledge of the Sacrament, more in the beginning of the first Chapter. In this, as in the former, we must diligently try and examine our selves, for, except we know all these things, we are not to partake at the Lords Table: because without it, whatsoever we do, is but blind devotion.

Chap. VII.

The examination of our Repentance.

THus of our Information in matters which we ought to know. As for our Reconciliation, we are to examine our selves in those things which concern either God or our Neighbours, because we have, and do often offend both.

Those which concern God are principally two. 1. Repentance, whereby we testifie our hearty sorrow for offending him, with a desire of amendment. 2. Faith, where-

whereby we take hold on his mercy, for the pardon and forgiveneſs of them.

Firſt, We are to try whether we have attained to a competent meaſure of Repentance. And indeed, if we truly look into our ſelves, and conſider that we muſt one day give an account for every idle word, we ſhall find matter enough for Repentance, if our heart be not hardened in ſin. Now, that it is neceſſary to examine our ſelves herein, appears from this, becauſe without it we have no ground at all for any comfort in Chriſt Jeſus: for he, which is ſtuft with his ſins, is no more fit to receive Chriſt, then a glutted

ſtomack its meat: and again, *unto them that are defiled, there is nothing pure.* Tit. 1.15. that is, if through unbelief, they remain in their pollutions; but *unto the pure all things are pure; and if we cleanſe our hands and purifie our hearts, and ſo draw nigh unto God, he will draw nigh unto us,* Jam. 4.8. *as many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them,* Gal. 6.16. Let us then *ſearch and try our ways, and turn unto the Lord,* Lament. 3.4. and put on *David's* reſolution before we come to the Lords Table: *I will waſh my hands in innocency, O Lord, and ſo will I go to thy altar,* Pſal. 26.6. In this examination of our Repentance

tance we muſt have reſpect both unto the time paſt and to come.

In reſpect of the time paſt we are to perform three duties.

1. Carefully ſearch our hearts to find out our own corruptions; that knowing them, we may the better avoid them, which is moſt neceſſary to be done, and that in the firſt place, becauſe it is impoſſible that he ſhould ſeek to go into the right way, which doth not firſt ſee his errour: and thus much we muſt know, that he that will not ſet his ſins before him here, to his coverſion, ſhall have them ſet before him hereafter, to his confuſion,

on, if we will needs cover and hide ſins, let us in Love and Charity cover the ſins of others, for *love covereth a multitude of ſin*, 1 Pet. 4. 8. that is, layeth them not open before men to their diſgrace, who have committed them: as many do, who delight to hear other mens faults ript up to the quick, but cannot endure to hear of their own: we ſhould not ſo much exclaim againſt other mens ſins, but rather be humbled for our own, and lay them fully open before our ſelves, that ſo we may come to a more ſerious repentance for them. Which, I think, we cannot but do (except we have more then ſtony hearts) when

when we conſider the torments which Chriſt ſuffered for our ſins; and ſee our own miſery that we are in our ſelves: for this muſt needs drive us unto God, as a deſperate Diſeaſe unto the Phyſitian; and make us utterly to accuſe our ſelves, and ſay, Pſalm 51.3. *I acknowledge my fault, and my ſin is ever before me.*

Now the chiefeſt means, which we can uſe to come to the knowledge of our ſins, are theſe two. 1. A continual meditation in the Word of God, wherein, (as in a glaſs) we ſhall plainly ſee all our deformities. 2. A ſeaſonable conference and converſation with ſuch as are them-

themſelves touched with their ſins, both which are excellent means: and therefore we ought ſincerely to love the Word of God, becauſe it doth diſcover our ſins unto us; and diligently read, and exerciſe our ſelves in it, that ſo we may come to a full knowledge of it, and alſo heartily affect and love thoſe whom we ſee to be thus affected. When we have thus conſidered, that we ought, and how we may diſcover our ſins, let us examine our ſelves whether we have thus done in our life paſt or no, giving thanks to GOD that he hath at any time diſcovered ſuch or ſuch ſins unto us: if we find that we have

have not thus done (as God knows, we are all to ſlack herein) let us ſeaſonably repent us of this neglect, and be ſorry that we have no ſooner repented; deſiring God, that he will be pleaſed ever more and more to diſcover our ſins unto us, that ſo we may the better forſake them, and ſerve him as we ought. Having thus unfolded our ſins before our eyes, let us in the ſecond place examine, how in ſorrow, we have humbled our ſelves to God for them; for this is that, even our ſorrow, which muſt move God to compaſſion: and we know that God *is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart, and will ſave ſuch*

* 2 Cor VII. 11.

such as be of an humble spirit. Psalm 34. 18. And therefore *David* being pressed down with the burden of his sins, comforted himself in this saying: *The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, shalt thou not despise,* Psalm 51. 17. Whereas on the contrary, if we have no true sorrow, if our souls be not wounded within us for our sins, we cannot expect that either we, or our Prayers should be accepted of God: or, that we shall with the Sacrament receive any comfort to our souls, if we come not to it with sorrow for our former transgressions.

Now there is a twofold sorrow

ſorrow. 1. Servile, when we are ſorry for our ſins (as ſome ſervants are when they have offended their Maſters) not becauſe we have ſinned againſt ſuch a Maſter, but becauſe we have thereby made our ſelves ſubject to the puniſhment due unto our offence: this is not that ſorrow which God expecteth of us: for it rather driveth us to diſpair, than to any pious Meditations. 2. Filial, when (like natural Children) we grieve for our ſins, not ſo much in reſpect of the puniſhment due unto us, as that we have ſinned againſt ſo merciful and loving a Father. This is that true ſorrow, with which we ought

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to be affected: which we may obtain two ways. First, by our selves. Secondly, by the help of others also.

By our selves, and so by the consideration especially of two things: First, who it is that we have offended: even God himself, who in tender mercy towards us, gave his only begotten Son to dye for our sins. The consideration of which cannot but work in us a true sorrow, that we should offend so merciful a God: for what son is there (if he have in him the affection of a son) but would grieve that he should offend a Father, which hath been ever loving and kind unto him?

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2. The grievousness of our sins which we have committed; which will plainly appear, if we consider them either in respect of our selves, how deadly they wound the Conscience; or with reference to others, how infectious they have been to them, whom we have often drawn into the same faults, which we our selves have committed; and so have made them guilty of our sins, and our selves of theirs.

The next means to attain this sorrow, is the help of other men, who are themselves touched with a feeling in this kind; with whom we ought to accompany our selves

ſelves, and patiently to accept of their Admonitions, ſtill accounting them our trueſt Friends, which moſt faithfully and roundly puts us in mind of our faults. The Hypocrite may eſteem ſuch as deſire thus to expreſs their love, buſie-bodies, or the like: but *Davids* wiſh was, *That the righteous might ſmite him friendly, and reprove him*, Pſal. 141. 5. and whoſoever is a ſound hearted Chriſtian, will ever ſtrive to make the beſt uſe of ſuch, as he can. Let us therefore examine our ſelves, whether we have made good uſe of thoſe means or not: If we have not, we ought to humble our ſelves before God for this neglect alſo; earneſtly

earneſtly beſeeching him, that he will work in us true ſorrow for our ſins paſt, with a deſire of amendment. Whereunto, that we may the better move him, we are in the next place to lay open and confeſs our ſins to God, which is a third thing required in our Repentance. Confeſſion is ſo neceſſary, that without it we can expect no pardon at Gods hands, but rather ſome judgment or other; and therefore *Solomon* ſaith, *He that covereth his ſins ſhall not proſper, but who ſo confeſſeth and forſaketh them, ſhall have mercy*: and Saint *John* perſwadeth us hereunto by the mercies of God, ſaying, *If we confeſs our*

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ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs, Joh. 1. 1, 9.

Now in our confeſſion we are to obſerve eſpecially three things. Firſt, what we are to confeſs. Secondly to whom. Thirdly how.

As for the firſt, there is a twofold confeſſion. 1. *Laudis*, or of Thankfulneſs: of which *David* ſpeaks, *Pſal.*89. 1. *With my mouth will I ever be ſhewing thy truth; yea every day will I give thanks to thee and praiſe thy name*, Pſal.145. 2. Which we are alſo daily to practiſe according to his example: but this is not that confeſſion which is ſo properly meant here in the matter of Repentance

tance. There is therefore another, called *confessio fraudis*, a confession of sin; and this we are to make, if we will truly repent: which ought to be, not of some sinnes only, but of all, as far as we can call them to mind; and especially of those beloved and bosom sins, to which we are most addicted: which that we may the better do, we ought daily to renew the memory of them in our selves; that so we may be the better able faithfully to confess the same, as often as occasion requires.

2. We are to confess our sins, not unto men or Angels, but unto God, who is the supream Judge of all.

There

There is indeed a time wherein we may make confeſſion before men, either in publick, before a whole congregation by way of pennance, being by the Church thereunto commanded; or elſe in private, and that, either for ſatisfaction to our neighbour, whom we have wronged; or for conſolation, to the Miniſter, when our conſciences are troubled. But that confeſſion, which is a part of our Repentance for our ſins paſt againſt God, and wherein we deſire full pardon for the ſame, we are to make to God alone: for he it is, who is offended, and he alone that can forgive our ſins.

3. Our Confeſſion muſt not

not be of the heart only, but of the mouth also; for God who made both, expecteth to be honoured by both; and as both have been unclean before him; so they ought both also to acknowledge the same; that he may cleanse and purifie both them, and with them, the whole man.

Again, our profession must proceed from a two-fold ground. 1. Hatred of sin, because by it we dishonour God. 2. Hope of mercy, which is that we aim at in our confession; and it must further be qualified with sincerity, with shame and sorrow that we have offended so gracious a God, lest God reject us as hypocritical. Let

us therefore henceforth leave off censuring the faults of other men, and begin to aggravate our own; and especially before we presume to come to the Supper of the Lord, let us take some time unto our selves wherein we may be most private, and shut our selves up in our Closets, and there humbly on our knees lay open before God those sins which we have committed in our life past; and that fully and faithfully, neither diminishing the number of them, not mincing the haynousness of them, for God will not be mocked. These are things which we are to perform in respect of the time past: as for the time

to come, we muſt know, that he which will truly repent, muſt not only turn from evil, but alſo turn unto good; and therefore, having confeſſed our ſins paſt with ſorrow for them, we muſt (if we expect pardon) conſtantly purpoſe for ever after, by Gods grace, to amend and reform our lives, reſolving (as much as in us lieth) to avoid all occaſion, which may draw us into the like ſins again, and to make better uſe of thoſe means which God hath afforded us, then we have done heretofore; and that by ſo much the more, by how much we have offended ſo gracious a Father. But of this reſoluti-

on of amendment, more in the 12. Chap.

CHAP. VIII.

The Examination of our Faith.

THE Examination of our Faith, is that whereunto S. *Paul* exhorteth the *Corinthians*, saying, *Examine your selves, whether you be in the faith, or not*, 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. The neceſſity whereof appeareth even from this, that *without faith we cannot pleaſe God in any thing we do, Heb.* 11. 26. much leſs in this weighty buſineſs: yea Faith is ſo neceſſary, that without it we do receive nothing at all, when

when we do receive; for although with our bodily hands we receive the Bread and Wine; yet if we have not Faith, we want a hand to receive the Body and Blood of Christ, and the comfort which thence ariseth unto our souls: for how can we be perswaded in our consciences, that our receiving is acceptable unto God, and that the merits of Christ Jesus belong unto us without Faith? It is impossible that we should receive any more comfort than what we believe; and therefore our Saviour Christ saith, *He that believeth on me shall never thirst*, Joh. 6. 35. Therein implying, that he which doth not believe in

him, shall ever thirst: yea, which is fearful, *he which believeth not, shall be damned*, Mark 16. 16.

Now that Faith which is here required of us, must not be only a general faith, whereby we belive that the Word of God is true, and that God is a just Judge; (for this the Devils themselves believe, and tremble at it; and well they may, considering what is due to them, eternal condemnation) but we must go on further to a more special kind of Faith, and (which they cannot do) apply the merits of Christ, and the promises of God made therein unto our Souls and Consciences, saying with *Job*, *chap.*

chap. 19. *verse* 25. *I know that my Redeemer liveth*: I know by the knowledge of Faith, or I believe; and not only the Redeemer of Man, but my Redeemer liveth.

Of which that we may the more fully perſwade our ſelves, we muſt believe; firſt, concerning our ſelves, that we are not able of our ſelves to do any thing that is acceptable and pleaſing in the ſight of God; *For we have nothing but what we have received of God*, as S. *Paul* teſtifieth, whether good gift, or ability of doing good.

2. Concerning the means of our Salvation, we muſt believe, that the merits of Chriſts death and paſſion,

are alone sufficient for our Redemption, without any merits at all, or satisfaction of ours.

3. Concerning God, we ought to believe, that if we truly repent us of our life past, constantly purposing to lead a new life hereafter, and sincerely use those good means which he shall afford us, he will then be merciful unto us in accepting our indeavors, through the merits of Christ Jesus.

4. Concerning the Sacrament, we ought to believe, that it is a means ordained of God, to exhibit unto us Christ Jesus with his merits, and a seal to confirm our Faith. If, upon consideration

1. Cor. XI. 26.

"For as often as ye eat this bread & drink this cup ye do show the Lord's death till he come?"

on of these particulars, we can be thus perswaded of our own insufficiency and unworthiness, and that yet notwithstanding upon our sincere humiliation, and obedience, God will be merciful unto us; if we cannot only say in general that God is a merciful Father, and that Christ died for the redemption of man; but every one of us in particular thus apply unto himself: I believe that God is my merciful Father, and Christ Jesus died to redeem me as well as any other; all which I shall have plainly confirmed unto me in the receiving of this Sacrament, wherein, (I trust) God will in mercy accept me

for Christs merits, though to my self I be unworthy: if (I say) we can find that we are not hypocritically, but sincerely, not verbally, but heartily, thus perswaded; then may we, having thus made peace with God by our Faith and Repentance, boldly approach unto the Lords Table.

CHAP. IX.

The examination of our Charity.

HAving examined our selves in those former duties towards God, we are to go on to another duty, which concerneth our neighbour:

bour, namely, charity: which is a free forgiving those that have offended us, with a testification of the same, when occasion is offered: and reconciliation of our selves to those, whom we also our selves have wronged.

That we may be the better perswaded unto a due performance of this duty, we are to observe two things.

1. The motives hereunto.

2. The manner how it ought to be done.

The motives, which invite us to the necessity of it, are drawn from the consideration of these four things.

1. What we our selves have done unto others.

2. What

2. What harm we do unto our ſelves by not being in charity.

3. What they are, with whom we are offended.

4. Whence ſuch wrongs as we receive, do primarily come.

As for the Firſt, we are conſcious unto our ſelves of a twofold offence which we have committed.

1. Againſt other men, whom perhaps we have at ſome time or other more wronged, than they us, or at leaſt our conſciences can tell us, that we have been prone and ready thereunto, had we not been prevented: and how can he, which hath been forward to wrong others,

others, make the moſt of every wrong offered by others unto himſelf? We muſt here take notice of the advice of Solomon in another caſe: *Seek not*, ſaith he, *to have thy ſervant curſe thee: for oftentimes thy heart knoweth, that thou thy ſelf haſt alſo curſed others*, Eccleſiaſt. 7. 22. So alſo be not haſty to aggravate the wrong which others have done unto thee; for thy heart can tell thee, that thou thy ſelf haſt alſo wronged others.

2. If this conſideration prevail not with us, let us conſider in the next place, that we have daily offended God far more than any man can offend us: and can any

any of us expect any mercy from God in the forgiveneſs of our debts, if we ſhew none to others in paſſing by ſmall matters of offence? Small, I ſay, becauſe the greateſt are ſmall in reſpect of the offences which we have committed againſt God. Our Saviour Chriſt told his Diſciples plainly, (and in them us) Mark 11. 25. *If ye do not forgive others their treſpaſſes, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your treſpaſſes*: which was verified in the Parable of the cruel ſervant; who (becauſe he had no compaſſion on his fellow-ſervant, as his Lord had pity on him) was *delivered to the tormentors, till he ſhould pay all that*

was due; with this application annexed, *so likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts, forgive not every one his brother their trespasses*, Mar. 18. 34, 35. The consideration whereof, I think, is able to move any good-hearted Christian to love his brethren, though they have offended him.

The second motive unto this duty is taken from the consideration of the harm, that otherwise we bring upon our own souls; which indeed is greater, than either we can do unto others, or they unto us.

This harm is twofold; 1. General; namely, a stain to all the good which we have

have: for *though we ſpake with the tongue of men and angels*: though we have all other good gifts, as of *Propheſying, underſtanding of myſteries*, &c. *yet if we have not Charity, we are nothing*, 1 Cor. 13. 1, 2. Let us not therefore boaſt of our learning and other good parts, as long as we are without Charity; for all is nothing; *no more than a ſounding braſs, or a tinkling cymbal.*

2. Particular: and ſo it is an hinderance. 1. To our Prayers. 2. To the right receiving of the Sacrament. The want of Charity is an hinderance to our Prayers in a twofold reſpect.

1. Becauſe, without Charity,

rity, we cannot exſpect to receive that which we pray for; for if we pray to God to forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us, how ſhall we hope that God will forgive us, if we forgive not others, which is the condition of our Prayers? To pray for the one, and not to perform the other, is to mock God in our Prayers; or rather, miſerably to deceive our ſelves: for as many have not becauſe they ask not, *ſo many work and receive not, becauſe they ask amiſs:* Jam. 4. 3. and ſuch are they which ask without Charity: and who knows how ſoon they may ſtand in need of Gods mercy?

2. It

2. It hinders our Prayers in this respect; because without Charity, we cannot joyn those, with whom we are at variance with our selves in our Prayers: which is against the rule of our Sivour Christ, who biddeth us to pray, *Our Father*, and *give us our Bread*; and so joyn others with our selves in every Petition: now how can we heartily pray thus for them, whom we love not? Our own Consciences can sufficiently tell us, that we cannot; yea, and that we often have been faulty herein. Wherefore, if we desire that our prayers should henceforth be effectual, let us follow the councel which Saint

Peter

Peter giveth to the Husband and Wife, 1 *Pet.* 3.7. Which is, *to live together according to knowledge, bearing one with another, that our prayers be not hindered*: which if we do, our prayers ſhall be much furthered, as Chriſt himſelf ſaith: *If two of you ſhall agree on earth, as touching the thing that they ſhall ask, it ſhall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven*, Matth. 18. 19.

The want of Charity is an hindrance to our due receiving of the Sacrament: becauſe the Sacrament is a Seal of our union and communion, as with Chriſt, ſo amongſt our ſelves; as Saint *Paul* ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 10. 16, 17.

The

The cup of bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the Communion of the blood of Chriſt? The bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the body of Chriſt? For we, being many are one Bread and one Body, becauſe we partake of one Bread: So that, unleſs we be joyned together in love, we cannot be capable of thoſe benefits, which otherwiſe would ariſe unto our ſouls.

Again, Love is the very badge whereby we are known to be Chriſts Diſciples, *Joh.*13.35. *By this ſhall all men know that ye are my diſciples, if ye love one another.* It is a part of that wedding-garment, wherewith every one ought to be cloathed, that

that comes to the Lords Table. Wherefore, if we desire to be accepted when we do come, and there to receive the benefits of Christs Death and Passion, let us put on the bowels of mercy and compassion.

A Third Motive unto this duty is taken from the consideration of the parties, with whom we are offended: they are Men, yea Christians as well as our selves; such for whom Christ died as well as for us. Shall we then think it hard to suffer some small wrong at their hands, for whom Christ thought it not too much to die? Can we perswade our selves, that there is the love of God in us, if we

we hate them whom he ſo loved? *every one, which loveth him that begat, loveth him alſo that is begotten of him,* 1 Joh. 5. 1. and whoſoever loveth him that did redeem, loveth him alſo that is redeemed by him.

The fourth Motive unto this duty of Charity is taken from a ſerious conſideration of the firſt otiginal, whence theſe wrongs proceed which we receive.

And here we may take notice both of the Authour, and alſo of the Diſpoſer thereof. The firſt Author is not ſo much the party from whom we receive the wrong, as the grand enemy of both us and them, the Devil, who will know-

knoweth, that *a house divided against it self cannot stand*: and therefore striveth by all means to set us at variance amongst our selves, though sometimes upon small occasions; that so thereby hindering us from the performance of good duties, (as the receiving of the Sacrament, and such like) which are the means of our Salvation, he may the more easily tempt us to worse imployment, while others are better exercised, and so make his side the stronger against us: and who knows what power it may please God to give him against us at such times? Wherefore, as we love our own safety, let us seek to

cross

croſs him, who thus oppoſeth us by his temptations: and if we will needs be at ſtrife, let it be with him, who will never be at quiet with us, until he have gotten the upper hand of us: which we may the more eaſily perſwade our ſelves unto; if we have reſpect not ſo much to other mens wrongful actions, as to his wicked ſuggeſtions, the cauſe of all, and aſſure our ſelves, that, in putting up a wrong, we right our ſelves, and croſs him; which ſhould be our chiefeſt aim.

Again, as the Devil is the Author of our wrongs: ſo God, who is the Diſpoſer of all things, hath a hand in it;

it: who permitted the Devil thus far to provoke us: perhaps for the tryal of our constancy and patience, or for some other ends best known unto himself: and, if we could but see, that the finger of God is in our Crosses, we would patiently answer with *David*, Psalm. 39. 10. *I will become dumb, and open not my mouth because it is thy doing; and so commit our cause to him that he might make our righteousness clear*, Psal. 36. 7.

These are the chiefest Motives to perswade us to this duty of Love and Charity: to all which we may adde another, taken from the exceeding love of God to us, *who*

so loved us, without any love received first from us, *that he sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins*, 1 John 4. 10. Whence the Apostle gathereth this powerful consequence: *If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another*, verse 12. Which that we may the better do, let us in the next place see the manner how it ought to be performed.

Here we are to have respect both to the time past, and also to come.

As for the time past; either we have wronged others, or they us. If we have wronged others, we ought to perform two things.

1. Undo that which we have

have done, by making reſtitution as far as in us lies: according to the example of *Zacheus*, Luke 19. 8. who was willing to *reſtore fourfold whatſoever he had taken from any man by falſe accuſation*: ſuch ought we to be, ready to make good whatſoever we have taken from any man, and to give ſatisfaction for any wrong that we have done. Neither is it ſufficient to be willing thus to make ſatisfaction, when we are moved thereunto; but we muſt alſo in the ſecond place, ſeek peace with thoſe whom we have wronged, though we be not asked: which is the counſel of Chriſt himſelf, Mat. 5. 23, 24. *If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there*

remembrest what thy brother hath ought against thee, leave thy gift before the Alter, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother: he saith not stay till he come to thee; to be reconciled when he cometh, but go thou to him. And so *David* also adviseth us, *Psalm* 34. 14. *Seek peace and ensue it*: stay not till it be offered to, or required of thee; but seek it. But perhaps those (whom we have offended) are far off, and we cannot come near them; or near, and will not be reconciled to us, what shall we do in this case? Here we ought to use all means that we can, for the procuring of peace and quietness: but if either

either occaſion or acceptance be denyed us, we muſt not doubt but that God will be pleaſed to accept of our deſire.

Now, if others have wronged us, we muſt (though perhaps it may ſeem ſomewhat hard) freely forgive them; loving even them that hate us, whereunto our Saviour Chriſt admoniſhed us in every Goſpel; ſaying, *If thy brother treſpaſs againſt thee ſeven times a day, thou ſhalt forgive him*, Luk. 17. 4. And again, *I ſay unto you, love your enemies; bleſs them that curſe you*, Mat. 5. 44. But ſome one may ſay, ſuch an one hath wronged me ſo much, that fleſh and blood cannot take it.

it, It is true, if thou consult with flesh and blood, it will seem hard to bear the least wrong: but flesh is not a Friend whom we may safely consult, but rather a bosom enemy, whom we ought to resist: if we ask counsel of CHRIST (whose counsel we ought, and may most safely follow) he will bid us go and be reconciled, and Saint *Paul* bids us *to feed our enemies, and to overcome evil with good*, Rom. 11. 12. and *Solomon* can tell us, that it *is the glory of a man to pass over a transgression*, Prov. 19. 11. As for revenge, it is not for us to meddle with it; because the Lord himself saith, *Deut.* 32. 35. *To me belongeth vengeance*

geance and recompence: and St. *James* will assure us, that to *have bitter envyings, and strife in the heart, is wisdom which descendeth not from above; but is earthly, sensual, devilish: but that wisdom which is from above, is easie to be entreated, and full of mercy*, James 3.17. Wherefore let us grieve at such wrathful motions, assuring our selves that it is a point of heavenly wisdom to forbear; and certainly, if we can but once find that God hath wrought in us a readiness to forgive those which have wronged us, and to pray for their conversion, we may esteem it an evident sign of Sanctification.

As for the time to come,

that we may the better preſerve the bond of Charity, we muſt reſolve carefully to obſerve theſe two ſorts of Rules. 1. How we may keep peace with others. 2. How others may do the like with us.

As for the firſt, becauſe others may outwardly wrong us either in word or deed, that we may in both avoid diſcontent and ſtrife thereupon, we muſt promiſe unto our ſelves a twofold Rule.

1. Concerning their words; which is the Rule in *Solomon*, Prov. 7. 21. namely, *That we take no heed to all words that are ſpoken*: for this is that, which often ſtirreth up ſtrife amongſt us, which otherwiſe might

might easily, and without any prejudice be avoided, if men were not too inquisitive and ready to take notice of every thing that is spoken: and therefore we should here not entertain, but sleight, yea reject such men, who under pretence of love unto us, will whisper in our ears, and maliciously informe us, against such or such an one, whom *Solomon* calleth *pick-thanks, whisperers, tale-bearers, such as will separate chief friends.* Prov. 16. 28. for occasion of separation may be given (if so taken) between friends: as we often see that he, which is singularly affected to another, may hastily speak some reproachful

words of him; which perhaps he will presently be sorry for, and not speak the like again: yet this shall be enough for the breach of Charity, if it be in the audience of a whisperer: who (to speak the truth) is a meer incendiary, that will ever be adding fuell to the fire of contention. Whence Saint *James* calls the tongue, *a fire, a world of iniquitie, that setteth on fire the whole course of Nature*, *James* 3. 6. And *Solomon* saith, *that without wood the fire is quenched; and without a tale-bearer, strife ceaseth*, Prov. 26. 20.

The Second rule, whereby we may keep peace with others, is concerning other mens

mens actions: which is that we ſo take them (though ſometimes wrongful) that we be not eaſily provoked thereby, for an haſty and furious diſcontent upon ſome ſmall occaſion, doth often break out to the breach of Charity; whereas a ſeaſonable deliberation would mitigate the matter, and ſo cover all in ſilence. And therefore Saint Paul telleth us, that *Charitie ſuffereth long, and is not eaſily provoked.* 1 Cor. 13. 4, 5. If we can but make true uſe of theſe two Rules, we may eaſily, for our parts, live at peace with others. Secondly, we muſt endeavour that others alſo by our carriage may do the like with us: to which

which purpose we must take away, first, a common fault amongst us, which is a main cause of strife and enmity. 2. The occasion thereof.

The fault it self is railing, scandalous and reproachful speaking: which is so frequent, that few or none (if we look narrowly into our words) but are conscious unto themselves hereof; but also heinous in it self, that Saint *Paul* ranketh it with robbery and extortion, 1. *Cor.* 6. 10. saying *that neither theives, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the Kingdome of God*; and so pernitious also unto the sweet society of men; that it is that breath, which often blows the coals of contention

tention ſo far, that they cannot be quenched again without blood: and daily experiente teacherh us, that there is no ſuch common cauſe of ſtrife and debate, as ſcandalous terms, which are ſo often heard amongſt us; ſo that, if we can but avoid theſe, we ſhall take away the very ground, upon which our wrongful actions are builded; and therefore Saint *James*, *beſeeching us* by the name of *Brethren*, exhorteth us *not to ſpeak evil one of another*, *Jam.* 4. 11. and Saint *Peter's* advice is, *that we lay aſide all evil ſpeaking, and as new born babes deſire the ſincere Milk of the Word.* 1. Pet. 2. 1.

Now, that our ſpeech of o-

thers

others may be such as it ought to be, let us follow the advice of *Solomon*, whose counsel is that *it be friendly*: Prov. 18.24. *A man that hath friends ought to shew himself friendly*: not uttering any thing that may tend to their disgrace; lest by such discourtesies, he loose their good likeing, but rather endeavour by fair, and courteous speeches, to knit their hearts faster, unto him.

Neither yet can we easily avoid this fault unless in the second place, we take away the occasion of it; which is a tickling desire, that most men are affected with, to hear the faults of other men (though perhaps lesse than their own

laid)

laid open and ſpoken againſt: which quickly begetteth a ſuſpition of their worth, and hereupon we too too readily build ſome calumnious report or other. If it ſhall therefore happen at any time, that we hear the ſlips and errours of another, let us not be delighted therein, but rather ſeek to cover them; for *he that covereth a fault ſeeketh love*, Prov. 17.9. and not he which deſireth to have them laid open. This is that which we ought to do, doth for the reſtoring and preſerving of Charity; wherein we muſt neceſſarily examine our ſelves before we come to partake with others at the Lords Table. If upon examination we

we find any thing wanting, either that we are not in charity with others, or others with us; let us according to these rules seek by all means to make good what is wanting, and so come.

CHAP. XI.

Of Premeditation and Prayer.

THus of the first thing to be perform'd in our preparation, namely Examination of our own fitness to receive. The second is the Premeditation of the benefits, which we are to receive: which we must not omit, that we may the better be stirred up

up to ſeek God, and to communicate at his Table with joy and gladneſs; for there is nothing which makes us more cold and backward in ſuch duties, than this, that we have not ſufficiently taſted how good the Lord is to thoſe that ſeek him; the conſideration whereof is alone able to move any man to a longing deſire after him. Wherefore, haveing ſearched into our own eſtate by a ſecond examination, leſt we ſhould yet fall back to a lukewarm careleſneſs of what we are to do, (to which the Devil will be ever ready to tempt us) and ſo become the more unfit to communicate at the Lords Table, either to

Gods

Gods glory or our own comfort, let us ever quicken our devotion with a seasonable premeditation before we come of the benefits which we are to receive by coming. All which are comprehended in this one word, Life, which we receive in the Lords Supper, by recieving Christ, who is *Life it self*, John 14. 6.

Now the life of a Christian is either the life of Grace here, or of Glory hereafter.

The life of Grace (which we obtain in this Supper) consists of two things.

1. A happy freedom from a twofold evil; first, of sin; from which we are freed by the death of Christ: whose blood

blood (if we rely on him (will make our ſins (though as red as Scarlet) to become as white as wool.

2. Of puniſhment; from which Chriſt hath redeemed us by the ſhedding of his blood; ſo that *there is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus*, Rom.8.1. where we may boldly ſay, *Who is he that condemneth? it is Chriſt that died: yea rather that is riſen again, who is even at the right hand of God, making interceſſion for us*, verſe 34.

The ſecond thing is a comfortable enjoyment of a threefold good.

1. An inſeparable union both with Chriſt our Head, *from whom nothing ſhall be able*

to

to ſeparate us, Rom. 8. 38. as alſo with our brethren and fellow-members in Love and Charity; which *David* accounted *A good and pleaſant thing*, Pſal. 133. 1.

2. A bleſſed ſtrengthning of our faith, whereof this Sacrament is a ſure ſeal (as before) whence it ſhall come to paſs, that we ſhall be able to reſiſt the temptations of the Devil, (who ſtriveth by all means to make ſhipwrack of our faith and us) and reply with *David*, Pſ. 16. 9. *I have ſet God always before me, for he is on my right hand, therefore ſhall I not fall*: this is that which *will make our hearts glad, and our fleſh to reſt in hope*: as it is *verſ.* 10. which bring-

bringeth in a third good, and that nor the leaſt, that God vouchſafeth to his people in this world, namely, Peace of conſcience.

3. This is that which we are moſt carefully to ſeek after, and which in the latter end, will be more worth unto us, than ten thouſand worlds of pleaſure which we can enjoy: and therefore *David*'s counſel is, *Keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right, for that ſhall bring a man peace at the laſt*, Pſal. 37. 38. Now wherein can we better keep innocency, than by being carefully and faithfelly exerciſed in Gods ſervice? And what greater comfort of heart, and what greater

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rer peace of conſcience can rebound to a poor ſinful ſoul, than the full aſſurance of the forgiveneſs of his ſins, and his inſeparable union with Chriſt Jeſus? which we receive, if we receive aright, by receiving this Sacrament. This is that, beſides which there is nothing in us which ſhall be able to ſtrengthen and comfort us againſt our Enemy the Devil, in the day of our departure hence; who will then be ſure to affright us with the uglineſs of our ſins (though now in policy he cover them) that ſo he may, if it be poſſible, drive us to deſpair of Gods mercy towards us: then (I ſay) by the help of a good

good conſcience, as *Samuel* reſolutely ſpake unto the *Iſraelites*, 1 Sam. 22. 3. ſaying, *Behold, here I am; witneſs againſt me before the Lord, and before his anointed; whoſe Ox have I taken? whom have I defrauded? and I will reſtore it you*: ſo ſhall we be able to non-plus our calumniating enemy, and ſay, Behold, Satan, here I am, witneſs againſt me before the Lord: wherein have I done thoſe evil things which I ſhould not have done? wherein have I omitted thoſe good duties which I ſhould have done? when did I at any time deſpair of Gods mercy, or neglect the ſame? when did I prophane, or abuſe his holy Sabbath?

Sabbaths? When did I contemn or neglect his word and Sacrament? here I am; witneſs againſt me: but my conſcience tells me to my comfort, that I have diligently, according to my power, performed what I ought, and therefore thou haſt no part in me. If we can thus clear our ſelves, then ſhall we be able to ſay with S. *Paul*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 7, 8. *The time of my departure is at hand, I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith*: and that which followeth hereupon, is *Henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs.* This Crown is that benefit, which we ſhall receive, after this life of grace is ended, in the life of

of glory. In the mean time, while we live here, we ſhall receive, though not this Crown actually, yet the full aſſurance thereof, believing with S. *Paul*, *That it is laid up for us, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, ſhall give us at the laſt day.*

Theſe are the benefits which every true Communicant receiveth at the Lords Table: wherefore (as we deſire to receive theſe benefits, which paſs all underſtanding) let us carefully meditate thereon, that we may be inflamed with the deſire of them.

But becauſe all that we can do, is nothing without Gods Bleſſing, we are in the

next place to pray to God, that he will be pleased to bless our endeavours, and to accept us in his Son, which is the third duty required of us in our preparation: without the due performance of which, though otherwise we have diligently prepared our selves, we cannot expect to receive any comfort of soul, with the Bread and Wine, because God only giveth that unto us, and he is debter unto no man: let us therefore seek unto him by Prayer for a Blessing, who is the giver of all Blessings. This we ought to do first in private, setting aside some convenient times, wherein we may freely betake our selves to this duty:

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but especially in the morning when we are to receive, we should rise early, and consider what we are to do that day, namely, sit at the Lords Table, and therefore be sure that we consecrate our selves to God by Prayer and good Meditations. Secondly, in publick with the Congregation, where we ought to present our selves at the very beginning, that so we may joyn together in all things which we are to perform, and there, at our first entrance, pour forth unto God (as at all other times) this, or the like Prayer.

O Lord, strengthen me against the temptations of Satan, who strives to draw away my heart

from thee; and accept the prayers which I shall now make unto thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Which done, joyn with the Congregation in such Prayers as are then used.

In both we are carefully to consider two things.

1. For whom we ought to Pray; and that is, not for our selves only, but others also, according to the Counsel of S. *James, chap. 4. v. 16. Pray one for another*, which we learn from the pattern of Prayer; the Lords Prayer, left unto us by Christ himself.

2. How we ought to pray, and that is, first in Humility, with a feeling of our own wants, for which the poor Pub-

Publican was *rather juſtified* than the proud Phariſee for his vain boaſting, *Luke* 18. 14. Secondly, in a ſetled and fervent devotion: when we pray, our minds ought not to be fixed on any thing elſe, (as many, God knows, are) for God will have the whole heart, or none. 3. In Faith; with confidence that we ſhall receive what we ask; for *he which wavereth*, that is, not believeth, *Let not that man think that he ſhall receive any thing of the Lord*, *James* 1. 7. If we be deficient in any one of theſe conditions, we ask amiſs, and ſo ſhall receive accordingly. Wherefore, as we deſire to receive benefit, and comfort

by the Lords Supper, Let us ſeek unto God for it: and as we hope to have our Prayers heard, let us pray both for our ſelves and others in true humility, fervency, and devotion, and aſſured hope of obtaining.

Chap. XI.

Of Meditation at the Lords Table.

HAving thus fitted our ſelves by examination of our eſtate, premeditation of the benefits, and prayer for a bleſſing, we may aſſure our ſelves that we have prepared our ſelves for the receiving of the Holy Communion (though

(though by reaſon of our weakneſs, not in that meaſure) yet in that right manner as we ought: and ſo have performed the firſt duty required of us, namely, diligent preparation; whereupon we may boldly and chearfully (otherwiſe not) preſent our ſelves unto the Lords Table: where we are to be exerciſed in a ſecond duty, namely, a ſeaſonable Meditation.

This Meditation muſt be threefold. 1. Before. 2. In the time of the Conſecration. 3. After the ſame, or, in the time of Receiving.

Before the Conſecration, when the Miniſter is going towards the Table, Meditate

on these two things. 1. Seeing the Table spread, and the Elements set thereon, we are to consider, what place we are come unto; namely, the Table of the great King of Heaven and Earth: and that therefore we ought most carefully and reverently, to behave our selves, both in body, by a reverent and seemly gesture: and also in mind, lading aside all earthly cogitations whatsoever, and that in a twofold respect, 1. Because the place it self is holy, and therefore ought not to be profaned by any unseemly behaviour, for these must be laid aside, as God commanded, *Exod.* 3.5. *Put off thy Shooes from off thy feet,*

feet, for the place where thou ſtandeſt is holy ground. 2. Becauſe as the place is holy, ſo alſo God himſelf is there amongſt us, as he ſaith, *Matth.* 18. 20. *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them.* He is in the midſt of us, beholding not only our outward geſture, but our very hearts and affections; and ready both to reward thoſe that honour him by reverencing, and to puniſh all ſuch as diſhonour him by profaning and abuſing his holy ordinance: which we ſhall do if our carriage be not with fear and reverence.

2. When we hear the Miniſter ſay, *Draw near and*

take this Sacrament, we must consider, that God by his Minister freely inviteth us to his Table: then let every one lift up his heart by this or the like ejaculation.

Lord, I am not worthy, by reason of my sins, to approach before thee: but seeing it hath pleased thee in mercy to call me, behold, in humility and obedience I come.

Then joyn in Prayer with the Minister. In the time of the Consecration we ought seriously to settle our minds on the Elements, and the Actions about them, for the better stirring up of our devotion: and so meditate thus, 1. When we hear the Minister read the Words of Christs In-

Inſtitution, and ſee him take the Bread and Wine, we ought joyfully and thankfully to meditate on the great love of God, in ſetting apart his Son for the redemption of us his enemies, in the taking of theſe Elements, and ſetting them apart to be diſtributed unto us, as ſeals and pledges of the ſame: joyfully (I ſay) in reſpect of the benefit which doth thereby come unto us, and thankfully in reſpect of Gods love, which is greater then all the hearts of men joyn'd in one, are able to expreſs.

3. When we ſee the Bread broken, and the Wine poured out, we ought to be exerciſed in a twofold Meditation.

1. Of

1. Of comfort; conſidering that the Bread is broken, and the Wine is poured out, not only to be the more viſible to the Communicants, but chiefly to repreſent unto us the crucifying of Chriſts Body, and the ſhedding of his Blood for our ſins: for *he was broken for our iniquities*, Iſaiah 53. 5. By which is not meant that any bone of him was broken, but that he was crucified: whence we ſhould every one of us gather this comfort, ſaying to our ſouls: *Chriſt Jeſus was broken on the Croſs, and ſuffered an accurſed death for me, by whoſe merits I truſt, I ſhall eſcape the curſe of that death, which is due for my ſins unto me.* And here by the

way

way we may take notice how the Papiſts do erre in delivering whole Cakes unto the Communicants, which repreſents Chriſt whole, not crucified, and ſo affords the leſs comfort.

2. Of ſorrow, and that for our ſins; the grievouſneſs of which was ſuch that they could not be ſatisfied for, without the precious blood of *Chriſt Jeſus*: theſe were the ſpears that pierced him to the ſoul; that was that which drew his precious Blood from his ſide: and the conſideration of this ſhould breed in us a hearty ſorrow, that we, ſo vile wretches as we are, ſhould thus wound ſo loving a Redeemer: & certainly if we do

not

not grieve for thoſe ſins, for which he hath ſo much ſmarted, we may juſtly fear that the ſtupid Earth, the hard Rock, and the dark Graves, which trembled, rent, and opened at his death, ſhall one day riſe up in judgment againſt us, and condemn us. When therefore we ſee the Bread broken, *&c.* let every one thus meditate: *O vile wretch that I am, that I by my ſin, ſhould thus wound my merciful and loving Redeemer.*

After the Conſecration, when the Miniſter is receiving himſelf (conſidering that we are in the preſence of God, who ſeeth our very hearts) we ſhould pour out our ſouls unto him in this or the like ſoliloquy.

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O ſweet Jeſu, I do humbly acknowledge with the Centurian, that I am not worthy that thou ſhouldeſt enter under my roof, much leſs to come and ſup and dwell with me: but ſeeing it is thy good pleaſure to vouchſafe me this favour, cleanſe me I beſeech thee from my ſins, that I may entertain thee in a pure and ſanctified heart, ſtrengthen my faith that I may fully rely on thy mercy, comfort me with thy bleſſed Spirit, and ſo dwell with me for ever. Grant this, O bleſſed Redeemer, for thy mercies ſake. Amen.

Again, before we receive; when the Miniſter is coming to diſtribute, and offers the Elements unto us (conſidering that Chriſt with all his

his benefits are offered unto us by God, as well as the Elements by the Minister) let every one meditate thus with himself: *Christ with the benefits of his death doth now come to sanctifie and comfort my sinful soul, in full assurance whereof I am to receive these signs and seals at the hands of his Minister*: And so as he stretcheth out his hands to receive these, let him lift up his soul in Faith with this or the like ejaculation, *Come Lord Jesus unto thy humble servant, as my trust is thou wilt.* This we are to do after the consecration, before we receive.

After this in the act of receiving we are to perform these two things.

1. While

1. While we eat the Bread meditate every one thus.

Bleſſed Jeſu, I do heartily believe that thou waſt crucified on the Croſſe and that for me as well as for any other, and, as I now have received this Bread broken, whereby my body ſhall be nouriſhed: ſo I believe that I have alſo received ſpiritually thy body crucified with all the benefits thereof, the full pardon of all my ſins; and the ſtrengthning and refreſhing of my ſinful ſoul: this I believe, Lord help my unbelief for thy mercies ſake. Amen.

2. When we drink the Wine, and while we feel it in our ſtomack, we ſhould thus meditate.

Moſt bleſſed Redeemer, I do truly

truly believe that thy Blood was ſhed out of thy Body as verily as I have received this Wine apart from the Bread, and that for the remiſſion of my ſins, as well as any others: and I do alſo believe that with this Wine I have received thy precious Blood, whereby my ſins are fully waſhed away, and my ſoul purified: and that according to thy promiſe, I ſhall never hunger nor thirſt any more, becauſe with this Bread and Wine I have received thy fleſh, which is meat indeed, and thy Blood, which is drink indeed; with which I humbly pray thee to cheriſh and nouriſh my poor ſoul, and to increaſe in me hearty love to theſe my fellow members, who have now participated with me, that ſo

we

we may ſerve thee as we ought, and that nothing may be able to ſeparate us from thy love, which I humbly beſeech thee to grant for thy mercies ſake. Amen.

CHAP. XII.

Of Practice.

THis is that whereon we ought to meditate in the time of receiving: which being duly performed, we ought in the next place to take notice of a religious Practice of thoſe things, which are to be obſerved afterwards in our life and converſation.

Theſe things may be reduced to two Heads: namely, ſuch

such as we are to do. 1. In the Church. 2. At home,

In the Church we must perform two duties.

1. Having ended the former meditations, we ought each man in particular to give thanks unto God for his mercy, in this or the like form.

O Lord, I humbly bless thy Holy Name, for that thou in mercy vouchsafed to accept me at this thy Table amongst the rest of thy elect and chosen people, and that thou hast so graciously fed my languishing soul with the precious body and blood of Christ Jesus. I confess, O Lord, that I am not worthy of the least of thy favours: but seeing it hath pleased thee thus to have

have mercy upon me; give me grace, I humbly beseech thee, to walk worthy of this thy mercy in newness of life, to the glory of thy holy name, and the salvation of my sinful soul, even for thy mercies sake. Amen.

2. After this, every one ought to joyn with the Congregation in Prayer and Thanksgiving, praising God for his goodness, and so depart lovingly together with chearful hearts, that God hath so graciously entertained us his unworthy servants.

After we are come home, we are further to take notice of two duties.

1. Meditation, meditating seriously what comfort we have received by being at the

the Lords Table. Upon which consideration, if we find any good motions in our selves, any assurance of the forgiveness of our sins, we ought by all means to cherish the same, by the comfortable remembrance of Christs death and passion for us; and so much the more lift up our thankful hearts unto God for his mercy; as S. *Paul* sweetly exhorteth the *Colossians*, saying, *As I have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him; rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, abounding therein with thanksgiving*, *Colos.* 2. 6, 7. And this is that which *Solomon* maketh a true note of a righteous man, that he will ever

ever be increasing those good gifts which he hath in him: when he saith, *Prov.* 4. 18. *The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto perfect day.* When therefore we shall find a little faith, a little love in us (as God knows the best of us hath little enough) let us desire to increase it, and to have our corruptions diminished: for these desires are a beginning of Grace, and a sign of a heart well affected: and of this desire we cannot make a better tryal, than by considering whether we long to receive again the next time, that so these good beginnings may be the more perfected.

But

But if we find not this comfort in us: let us ſearch into our ſelves, whether there be not ſome ſin in us as yet unrepented of; and whether we came not ſo well prepared to the Communion as we ſhould, if ſo, then ought we to humble our ſelves before God, with ſorrow for this our negligence: If we cannot ſee this in us, but that we came well prepared: then muſt we patiently wait the Lords leiſure, and pray earneſtly that he will give us the comfort of his Spirit, with full aſſurance that he will grant our requeſts when it ſhall be beſt for us.

The ſecond duty, wherein we muſt be exerciſed at home

home, is a resolution or constant purpose of leading a new life, whereunto Saint *Paul* earnestly inviteth us, *Rom.* 6. 19. saying, *As you have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and unto iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to Righteousness, unto Holiness:* and why? *because being made free from sin, and become servants unto God, we have our fruit* (not unto sin, but) *unto godliness*, verse 22. Shall we then be made free from sin, and become the servants of God, and yet return unto sin again? God forbid: if we do so, *we receive the grace of God in vain*: which Saint *Paul* beseecheth the Corinthians to

take heed of, 2 *Cor.*6. 1. now what is it but to receive the Grace of God in vain, when after we have *escaped the pollutions of this world through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we are again intangled therewith*; and as the Sow to the mire, return to our former course of life again? S. *Peter* will assure us, that *it had been better not to have known the way of righteousness, then after we have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto us*, 2 Pet. 2. 21. And well were it, if this were duly considered of some, who think it sufficient to live precisely that day, in which they receive (though perhaps they

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can ſcarce do that) and preſently afterwards live as prophanely and looſly as ever they did; but we muſt know that God expects a daily reformation of thoſe, which preſent themſelves at his Table; and, if we do not duly conſider of it, we ſhall one day with fear and trembling acknowledge it; as S. *Paul* plainly tells the *Hebrews*, ſaying, *If we ſin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation*, Heb. 10. 26, 27.

Now that we may the better lead a new life before God, we muſt conſider, that to the

direction of a Christian life, three things are to be known of us.

1. What we are to pray for.

2. What we ought to believe.

3. What we are to do.

The first being rightly known, affords us a perfect direction for our Hope: the second for our Faith, the third for our Piety.

The first we have fully set down in the Lords Prayer, composed by Christ himself as a most exact rule for all our Prayers.

The second in the Creed, which containeth the Articles of our Faith, contained in the Doctrine of the Apostles: called therefore the Apostles Creed. The

The third, in the Ten Commandments, written by the finger of God himself, and revealed unto us in his holy Word, to be our direction both for our holiness towards God, and our charity towards our neighbors.

These three Rules of our life (the Lords Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments) are daily repeated of those of the meaner and more simple sort, but yet (God knows) not so well understood as they should be, by divers to whom God hath given a greater measure of knowledge: never did our Land, yea almost every house, more freely abound with fruitful and com-

fortable Expoſitour upon theſe Rules, then now they do; yet who looks ſo far into them, as to know thereby the full extent of any of them? Some few indeed there are (whereof God increaſe the number) who make a conſcionable uſe of thoſe good means of Salvation: whereas others are well content, yea with delight deſire to read (and that upon the beſt days) vain and idle diſcourſes, which are ſo far from furthering us in the way of Salvation, as that (like Tares) they choak the Word of God, and hinder the growth thereof as we too often ſee by our daily experience. There is indeed a time for all things

things, for pleaſure as well as profit: but ſhall we ſpend the beſt of our time, yea (as ſome do moſt miſerably) the greateſt part of our time in ſuch vanities, and altogether neglect thoſe good helps for our direction; eſteeming them too plain and homely, or not pleaſant enough for our witty inventions, and accute judgments? Let ſuch know, that they, which thus neglect their own good, are guilty to themſelves of a twofold crime.

1. Of unnatural wroug unto their own ſouls, in ſtopping their eyes from beholding the light of ſalvation, which otherwiſe would ſhine unto them; dealing herein as

injuriously with themselves, as Papists do with their deceived Laity, training them up in ignorance and blind devotion.

2. Of a twofold ingratitude: 1. Towards those painfull Authours, which (like fruitful Lights) have spent themselves for the directing others, whose labours do well deserve to be accepted amongst us: and we shall prove our selves but unthankful Members of the Church wherein we live, if we make not that good use of those Lights, for which they were intended.

Secondly, (which is the greatest) we shew our selves unthankful towards GOD him-

himſelf, who hath in mercy raiſed up ſuch meanes for the helping of our infirmities; whereof others, better deſerving than our ſelves, have been deſtitute. Having therefore ſuch helps ſo freely offered unto us, let us (if we deſire to live more righteouſly before God) uſe them more carefully than we have done: endeavouring in the firſt place to know what is contained in each Petition of the Lords Prayer; that ſo, when we pray, we may know what that is for which we pray: and ſecondly, for our Faith, to know the full extent of every Article thereof; that ſo we may truly underſtand what this is, which we con-

feſs we believe: and becauſe both of theſe are little available, except our piety be ſuch as it ought to be, let us eſpecially be exerciſed in the Commandments of God; that thereby we may underſtand what we are commanded, and what forbidden. Theſe are the direct courſes which every true-hearted Chriſtian ought to take, and which will one day prove truly comfortable, when others, vain and frivolous, deceive us.

But becauſe our Piety and Religious behaviour is the chiefeſt thing required on our part, unto the leading of a new life, let us further ſee what rules we may yet obſerve for the directing thereof.

This

This Piety of ours is ſeen in theſe two things. 1. Our Words. 2. Our Works and Actions.

As for our Words, we ſhould follow the counſels of Saint *Paul* to the *Epheſians*, which is, that we avoid in our talk *all filthineſs and fooliſh talking and jeſtings which are not convenient*, Eph. 5. 4. and he giveth a very good reaſon for it, 1 *Cor.* 15. 33. *becauſe evil communications corrupt good manners*; and that oftentimes both in the ſpeaker and hearer. But ſome will ſay, What? muſt we never uſe any pleaſant diſcourſes? no jeſting at all? yes, there is a time for that alſo; ſo it be according to the rule of Saint *Peter*,

Peter, such *as God may thereby be glorified*, 1 Pet. 4. 11. other ways we may not: stir up our minds we may to an honest chearfulness, by civil and modest jestings, but obscene and prophane, which Saint *Paul* calls filthiness; vain and idle, which he terms fooliſh talking and jesting, which is not convenient; such I say, *ought not to be once named amongst us as becometh Saints*; for hereby both speaker and hearer are often stirred up to loose and vain gestures, or at leastwise to conceive and think of them, and so Gods name is much dishonored. Miserable it is to observe how frequently such speeches do pass for currant, under

under the assumed titles of merry discourses: but let us remember what our Saviour Christ hath said, *Matth.* 12. 36. 37. that *by our words we shall be justified, and by our words we shall be condemned, and that every idle word which we shall speak, we shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment.* Must we give an account of our words, and shall we not then be careful of them? Must we answer for every idle word, and shall we fill up our Discourses with Blasphemies, with obscene and scurrilous Jestings? If we must give an account of them, certainly these will lye heavy upon us: Wherefore let us rather with *David*, set

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a watch before our mouth, and bridle up our lips, that we offend not with our tongue: let us be careful that our words be such as *Solomon* commandeth, *Prov.* 25. 11. *Fitly spoken, which are like apples of gold in pictures of silver*; that is, such words as contain wholesome matter, and are spoken in a comely and decent manner, are as acceptable and pleasant to the ear of a judicious hearer, as silver pictures adorned with golden apples, are unto the eye of the beholder.

For our Works, we must as S. *Paul* counselleth, *walk as children of the light, ever proving what is acceptable unto the Lord*, Ephes. 5. 8, 10. *Having*

ving our converſation honeſt among men, that they ſeeing our good works, may glorifie God thereby.

How to direct both our words and actions aright, we muſt chiefly obſerve theſe two things. 1. How to avoid that which is evil in both. 2. How to ſeek and obtain that which is good.

To avoid that which is evil, four rules are eſpecially to be obſerved.

The firſt, concerns the beginnings of evil; namely, that we watch and pray according to our Saviours counſel and practice, *Matth.* 26. 41. *Leſt we enter into temptation*, and ſo be drawn away to ſin againſt God; for of

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our ſelves we are prone thereunto, and unable to avoid it: and if it go ſo far that we be once tempted to ſin, and feel in us any motion thereunto, we ſhould endeavour to reſiſt this temptation in the beginning, and reaſon thus with our ſelves; Did not I lately receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, where I had a full pardon of all my ſins (paſt, ſealed unto me) and where I vowed and promiſed to lead a new life before God; How then can I do this thing, and break my promiſe with God? I have put off my coat of ſin, and therefore I may not (I will not) put it on again: thus ought we to reſiſt temptations at the firſt, leſt

leſt they get the dominion over us.

The ſecond Rule concerns the occaſion of evil, which we muſt neceſſarily avoid, if we deſire to avoid the evil it ſelf.

The occaſions are diverſe, but eſpecially theſe two.

1. Idleneſs, from which proceed many (and theſe ſometimes hainous and crying) ſins; which the Son of *Syrach* calleth therefore, *the teacher of much evil*, Eccleſ. 33. 27. To avoid this, we muſt be careful to imploy our ſelves diligently in that vocation wherein God hath placed us; for otherwiſe, the Devil will be ſure to take an occaſion to tempt even the beſt

beſt of us; as we ſee in *David*, who was a man after Gods own heart; and yet, when he was walking on the roof of his houſe (while *Joab* and the reſt were in the battle) he was tempted to commit Adultery with *Bathſheba* the wife of *Uriah*, 2 *Sam.* 11. 2. And how many do we daily ſee drawn away to laſciviouſneſs, drunkenneſs, and ſuch like vices by this occaſion? Let us therefore carefully exerciſe our ſelves in our Vocation, that the Devil may not have an opportunity to ſet upon us.

2. Bad company, than which nothing almoſt is more forceable to draw us away to that which is evil; Let

Let *Joseph* but live in *Pharaohs* Court, and he shall soon learn to swear by the life of *Pharaoh*, Gen. 42. 15. and *if Israel abide in Shittim, the people will soon commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab*, Numb. 25. 1. wherefore God commandeth his people to *go out of Babylon, lest they be partakers of their sins*, *Rev.* 18. 4. And often are we partakers of other mens sins, by frequenting their society; yea, (which is miserable to observe) divers of ingenuous dispositon and civil behaviour, have by degrees been drawn away to looseness and riot, by associating themselves unfortunately with vain and dissolute persons.

And

And we may herein obſerve the policy of our enemy the Devil; who, when he findeth any man well diſpoſed of himſelf, and not ready to yield to others temptations, will beſet him (if he can poſſibly) with this ſnare, that ſo he may either by the wicked perſwaſions, or bad examples of others, ſteal away his heart, and allure him to that which is evil, which ſhould be a forcible Caveat unto us, to make us heedful what company we fall into, and with whom we acquaint our ſelves, if we have any care of our ſouls: ſeaſonable is the counſel of *Solomon* herein, who adviſeth us. 1. Concerning the Examples of others, not

not to conform our ſelves unto them *by walking in their ways, but to avoid and paſs away*, Prov. 4. 15. 2. Concerning their allurements, by no means to hearken unto them; *if ſinners intice thee, conſent thou not*, Prov. 1. 10. If they ſay, Come let us take our pleaſure in this or that ſort, let us go to ſuch a place, where we may freely do what we will: *If they thus draw thee, walk not in the way with them, refrain thy foot from their paths.* 3. As for familiarity with others, he adviſeth us to *make no friendſhip with an angry man, and with a furious man not to go.* Why? *leſt thou learn his way, and get a ſnare unto thy ſoul*, Prov. 22.

24.

24, 25. Wilt thou avoid Gaming, Swearing, &c. then ſhun that company wherein thoſe vices are practiſed, or elſe thou wilt rather increaſe them in thee. But ſome will ſay, ſuch an one is my familiar friend, and ſhall I leave him? that will be taken unkindly; ſhall I get my ſelf diſcredit, where I may avoid it? Yes, be he never ſo near unto thee, yet if he in his courſes forſake God, forſake thee; yet thou mayeſt therein ſhew thy ſelf a very friend to him, in winning him from his evil ways by thy forſaking of him; for ſo ſaith Saint *Paul*, 2 Theſſ. 3. 14. *If any man obey not our word, note that man, and have no company with*

with him, that he may be aſhamed: It may be when he ſeeth thee leave him, he will begin to think of his bad life, and ſo be aſhamed of it, and by degrees leave it; therefore leave bad company for their ſakes alſo, as well as thine own.

The third rule is, how we may reſtrain our ſelves when we are about to undertake any ſinful action: and that is by ſetting before our eyes this Caveat, *God ſees: for his eyes are over all*, Prov. 15. 3. & therefore whatſoever we do, we ſhould conſider that we do in his preſence: which, being conſcionably conſidered, cannot but breed in us both reverence and watchfulneſs; reverence, in reſpect of his Majeſty:

watch-

watchfulneſs, in reſpect of his all-ſeeing eye, that we offend him not, who will eſpy in us the leaſt fault, be it never ſo ſecretly kept from the world.

Again, conſider how merciful God hath ever been unto thee, in delivering thee from this or that danger, this or that ſin, whereinto thou muſt neceſſarily have fallen, if he had not upheld thee: and then anſwer the Devil when he templeth thee, as *Joſeph* did his wicked Miſtreſs; *How can I do this wickedneſs, and ſin againſt my God?* God hath been thus and thus merciful unto me, and ſhall I yet offend him: and provoke him to anger? God forbid.

The

The Fourth Rule is for our direction, when we are fallen into any ſin, which is this: When we are overtaken with any ſin (as who is not every day?) we ſhould preſently lament it, and not ſuffer it to go on any farther, leſt it come to a cuſtom, and ſo ſtick faſt in us: this is a difference which *Solomon* putteth between the righteous and the wicked. Prov. 24. 16. *A juſt man*, ſaith he, *falleth ſeven times, and riſeth up again; but the wicked ſhall fall into miſchief*: the juſt man, though he fall into any ſin, riſeth again by repentance, but the wicked ſinketh deeper down, even to the pit of deſtruction.

These are the chiefest rules to be observed for the avoiding of that which is evil.

The next thing, which we must look into, is, how we may obtain that which is good: Here we must principally observe these two things. 1. Make use of all occasions thereunto. 2. Make conscience of every good duty. As for the first, we must first, according to the example of S. *Paul*, Philippians 3. 14. *Use all diligence, that we may press towards the mark*, still endeavouring to be better: and when we find our selves deficient in the performance of any good duty (as God knows we are in all) we should do the same again, and endeavour to perform

form it more fervently, that ſo we may come to a greater meaſure of godlineſs. Again, we ſhould gladly embrace the company of good men, that by their example and advice, we may be brought to a ſenſe and feeling of thoſe ſins which we commit; counting it a great bleſſing of God, if thereby we at any time be croſs'd in thoſe ſins, to which we are moſt addicted, as gaming, &c. and ever eſteem beſt of that company, not where our ears may be filled with prophane jeſtings, or tickled with ſuperfluous conceits; but where our corruptions may be moſt roundly reproved; eſteeming them our beſt friends, that will moſt plainly and faith-

fully put us in mind of our errours; which is the counſel of S. *Paul* to the *Theſſalonians*, *I beſeech you* (ſaith he, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 12, 13.) *to know them which labour amongſt you, and are over you in the Lord, and admoniſh you, and to eſteem them very highly in love for their works ſake*: which may be our direction for eſteeming both of our familiar friends, and of our teachers; both which (if faithful) labour for our good in the Lord, by admoniſhing us, and both thereby deſerve from us a true regard as a recompence of this their love: therefore if any man deſire to be furthered in good duties, let him teſtifie it by loving ſuch men.

2. If

2. If we desire to obtain that which is good, we must be careful that we make conscience (as of avoiding every evil) so of doing every good duty, be it never so little, endeavouring with St. *Paul, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and men*, Acts 24.16. and labouring to keep not only some, but all Gods Commandments, according to *Davids* wish, *Psal.* 119.5,6. *O that my ways were made so direct, that I might keep thy statutes, so shall I not be confounded, while I have respect to all thy Commandments.* Let us not deceive our selves in thinking it sufficient, that we obey the Sabbath, and that we offend not God by

swearing, stealing, or such like hainous offences: and yet in the mean time make no conscience of a lye for our commodity, or of vain and idle discourses for delight, for if we thus do, it is certainly an argument of a bad heart.

But some perhaps will say, If I thus endeavour to carry my self in all things, if I now and then do not give a little way, I shall be accounted too precise and curious in matters which I need not. Be it so, yet be willing to undergo that censure, and esteem it safer to offend ungodly men by thy good life, then a righteous God by thy bad life: and though others account it too much preciseness, yet do thou

not

not so: but rather consider, that God commandeth us to *keep his precepts diligently*, Psalm 119.4. If diligently, then certainly there is nothing in his precepts superfluous; nothing which we may do, or not do, but every one, though of never so small matter, is to be performed of us: whosoever therefore shall endeavor to his power to keep the Commandments of God in every thing, is so far from being too precise, that he doth but what he is commanded.

To these Rules, for avoiding of evil, and seeking of good, we may add one more, as the rule of all the rest, and of our whole life, and that is the word of God, which alone

is

is able to direct us in the way to salvation, as *David* testifieth, *Psal.* 119. 9. *Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? even by ruling himself after thy word*: Wherefore let us carefully read, meditate, and confer about this Word, and that often, accounting (as well we may) every day lost, wherein we learn not something out of it, ever desiring more and more to be instructed therein, and account it a great blessing of God, that we have the use of it so freely to direct us in the way of salvation. Neither let any man think himself so Learned, that he needeth no farther instruction; for the best of us comes short of *David*, and yet he prayed

still

ſtill to *be inſtructed in the word of the Lord*, as we may ſee throughout the 119 *Pſalm*. Again, if we did know more then we do, yet we are dull in the performance of what we know; and therefore we have need to read the ſame again and again, to ſtir us up to a daily practice hereof: but that we may ſo uſe the Word of God, as that it may be unto us the ſavour of life unto life; let us at all times, when we are about to read it, lift up our hearts to God by prayer, that he may give a Bleſſing to our endeavours, without which, whatſoever we do in this or any other thing, it will be ſo far from being profitable unto us, as that it will

will rather prove our ruine in the end.

He which ſhall thus ſet his heart to ſerve the Lord by denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, by living honeſtly, righteouſly, and ſoberly in this preſent world; he, which ſhall thus carefully receive the Sacrament in a right manner, and hear the word with diligence, devoting himſelf to God by Prayer in all things which he doth: he which ſhall thus make conſcience of his ways in every thing, the bleſſing of *God* reſt upon him, as it needs muſt, and that peace of conſcience (which no man knoweth but he that enjoys) ever attend him here, and everlaſting peace and happineſs crown him hereafter. *Amen.*

THE CONTENTS.

Cap. 1. *What a Sacrament is, and how many there be.* p. 1.
2. *What the Lords Supper is.* 6.
3. *The necessity of receiving the Lords Supper.* 17.
4. *The necessity of preparation.* 45.
5. *Of examination in general.* 53.
6. *The Examination of our Knowledge.* 61.
7. *The Examination of our Repentance.* 70.
8. *The Examination of our Faith.* 90.
9. *The examination of our charity.* 96.
10. *Of Premeditation and Prayer.* 126.
11. *Of meditation at the Lords Table.* 140.
12. *Of Practice.* 153.

FINIS.